**Divide and conquer**

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**Divide and conquer**

by [TheLadyOrTheTiger](http://archiveofourown.org/works/6346108)

**Summary**

King Alistair and Inquisitor Trevelyan have both faced numerous obstacles in their lives - from Orlesian nobles to darkspawn. Now they team up to embark on their biggest challenge yet - seducing Cullen.
Huge thanks to the amazing jennybot221, for her invaluable help, and enthusiasm for this story, which gave me the confidence to actually post it. You are a gift, my friend.
The banquet was a dull affair. Another in a long line of tedious duties Evelyn Trevelyan had to perform as the Inquisitor. All those parties were slowly blending into one. It didn't matter where they took place or who was in attendance - it was all the same. She wasn't sure if she hated playing hostess or being the guest of honor more. Each came with its own set of annoying responsibilities. At least when she was the one visiting, she didn't have to approve the guest list and fret over the amount of wine, which was something of a blessing she supposed.

A servant in the Inquisition's livery passed her by, and Evelyn grabbed a glass from his tray. There should be enough to drink for everyone, but if there wasn't, she intended to drink before the barrels ran dry. She deserved a drink. The preparations for this event were long, and Evelyn wanted to congratulate herself on a job well done. Skyhold looked remarkable - every corner so clean it almost sparkled, beautiful flowers adorning long tables laden with food, innumerable candles illuminating the main hall. Everything had to be perfect. It was not every day that a king came calling. Alistair Theirin of Ferelden had arrived weeks before, with little to no warning, making everyone scramble to accommodate him, which meant that a proper party had to be pushed back, and not hosted immediately upon his arrival.

Traditional Ferelden music was being played by a small orchestra situated on Vivienne's balcony, overlooking the hall. Evelyn quite enjoyed the tunes, much more than the overly complicated Orlesian pieces. The lively sounds mixed with the hushed conversations of the guests and the rustling of voluminous skirts brushing against the stone floor. Unlike Evelyn, the people gathered were enjoying themselves, if their practiced smiles were anything to go by.

Evelyn sighed when she saw another Orlesian noble making his way towards her. If one more person complimented the lace on her dress she was going to scream. It was all the same - the same stilted conversations, insincere laughs and oh-so-subtle demands for her aid. At times she was making bets in her head as to which person would want what from her, and she was winning more and more of them.

The corset of her billowing dress was digging into her ribs, and the much praised lace at her collar, which as Leliana informed her was the latest thing in fashion, was making the back of her neck itchy. It was not a good combination, making the Inquisitor's mood even more bleak.

She was hoping to spend some time with king Alistair, but he was nowhere to be found as of yet. When she first heard about the monarch visiting she wasn't very excited. The almost nonexistent notice was rather rude, and the ensuing preparations were putting a strain on her. After that Trevelyan was expecting him to be pompous, boring, and demanding. Despite her heritage, she had no patience for nobles, and monarchs in particular. It was quite the pleasant shock when she actually got to talk to him and found out he was none of those things. Looking back, she should've known he would be different. After all, before becoming king he was a Grey Warden, and fought alongside the Hero of Ferelden to end the Fifth Blight. He was not a pampered little princeling born into privilege.

He was also devastatingly handsome, that was the first thing that struck her about him. When she first saw him in Redcliff, all those long months back, she couldn't appreciate that. Back then she had to make momentous decisions on the spot, and was rather shaken from her experience with the alternate future. Now, in the comfort of Skyhold she could truly see the king. He was still a true warrior, his tall frame packed with muscles, his hands calloused from holding a sword. His face was...
also a sight to behold - he looked elegant, but not in the soft Orlessian fashion. His features were sharp, what Varric would probably describe as rugged. What Evelyn liked most about him were his eyes - kind, expressive and full of humor. He appeared strong, but there was still gentleness in him, in the way he smiled, and in the way he kissed her hand in greeting.

When she was showing him around Skyhold their conversation flowed naturally and freely. In Redcliff they didn't get the chance to talk of ordinary things, only exchanging the most vital information. Now they were making up for that, connecting on a personal level. There were no awkward pauses, no polite comments about the weather. They just clicked, and it was as if they've known each other for years. Trevelyan never expected a king to be so lighthearted and funny. He constantly made her laugh, and she was pleased to know that he was also amused by her jokes. Alistair was nothing like any other dignitary she's dealt with before. Just being around him was making her feel lighter, happier. He made her forget her duties, instead of reminding her of them.

One sleepless night she found herself in the kitchens, searching for a midnight snack, but instead found the king gorging himself on her favorite cheese. In that moment, wearing just light breeches and a shirt opened at the throat, showing tantalizing glimpses of his chest, his mouth stuffed, he didn't look like a monarch. He was just a very attractive man who shared her taste in fermented dairy. She couldn't help laughing when he tried to apologize with his mouth full. They've spend most of that night seated on the cold floor, the cheese and a bottle of wine between them, talking about the most inane things and giggling like children who were getting away with doing something their parents would disapprove of. It was one of the best nights Evelyn could remember. There they were - king of Ferelden and the Inquisitor, their titles and responsibilities stripped away for a time, leaving just two people who enjoyed each other's company immensely.

The king left the ending of his visit open, and as far as Trevelyan was concerned, he could stay forever. It probably wasn't wise. She hardly needed to develop feelings for another unattainable man, but there she was, feeling that strange, sweetly painful pull towards the king. Nothing would come of it, but still she relished the time she could spend with Alistair. They confided in each other, both comprehending the struggles the other was going through, the challenges they faced. No one before understood Evelyn like Alistair did. He didn't put up a front, didn't play The Game. He was open and honest with her, listened and consoled, and if that wasn't possible - made jokes. Gaining his friendship and support was something Evelyn was always going to be grateful for.

The Orlesian noble was babbling incessantly about something Trevelyan couldn't care less about. To occupy her time she surveyed the hall, her eyes sliding over colorful dresses and bejeweled throats. Finally she noticed Alistair, standing at the edge of the crowd, looking powerful and elegant in his full regalia. He seemed to be staring at something very intensely, a smile tugging at the corners of his lips. Evelyn felt her stomach tighten in jealousy. She wanted to know which noble beauty was captivating him so. Following his line of sight to the object of his attention almost made her gasp. King Alistair was staring at Cullen. There was no mistaking it. She wanted to laugh and cry - she wasn't sure in which order.

"Do excuse me, my lord, the king has arrived and I must attend to him," she told the Orlesian dismissively.

Not waiting for a response, she strode off, leaving her empty glass behind, moving stealthily through the crowd, ending up at the king's back.

"He's quite something, isn't he?" she murmured in Alistair's ear. It was reckless, to call him out on it, but Evelyn was in no mood for games. Maybe Alistair would appreciate that.

"What? What are you... I have no idea who you could be talking about. None whatsoever," he
protested, stumbling over his words, only confirming what she already knew.

"Let's not pretend. You've been staring at my Commander," Evelyn told him sternly, moving to stand next to him.

It suddenly all made sense to her now. When he wasn't with her, the king was always with Cullen. In the beginning she thought that they bonded over the fact that they were both Fereldans, ex-templars and leaders of armies, but now she could see a different motive behind their interactions.

"Your Commander?"

Trevelyan sighed.

"No, not mine in the sense you're implying," she said, disappointment dripping from every word. How she wished Cullen could be called hers in that sense. She's wanted that for so long that the sharp disappointment she originally felt at his lack of response, has turned into a familiar dull ache.

"But you do... like him? Like him, like him," the king pressed on, adding special inflection to his words.

"Don't change the subject. We were talking about you finding him irresistible," Evelyn countered, trying to sound cool and detached, to make this whole thing a light joke, and failing rather miserably.

Alistair shifted awkwardly.

"I would never... I don't stare. I don't even look. At people. It was just his breastplate... So shiny and..."

"Fine, I do like him, so I know how transfixing staring at him is. You won't fool me," she cut off his rambling. Cullen always drew her attention, but that night he did look especially fetching, almost regal in his ceremonial outfit, standing tall and strong, dwarfing the nobles around him with his size.

"So if I were to admit to ogling your..."

"For the last time, he's not mine. I would want him to be, but he's not." Trevelyan was disappointed at how bitter she sounded. At the same time it was oddly freeing to honestly tell someone how she felt, to share the burden. She shouldn't do that, knew better, and yet with Alistair things just slipped out of her mouth.

"That's stupid. He must be stupid," Alistair said.

"Did you just call the Commander of my armies stupid?" Evelyn was a bit indignant, but mostly amused.

"I... uh... did. Sorry. It's just so... weird. If he knows you're interested in him, then he's an idiot if he doesn't jump at the chance to be with you. You're witty and strong and enchanting and drop dead gorgeous, and I probably shouldn't have said all of that."

Seeing a king blush was quite something, Evelyn decided, smiling at Alistair's pink cheeks.

"Why shouldn't you say that?" Trevelyan questioned, flattered and pleased by his word.

"You're interested in him, and you caught me staring at him. Now I'm complimenting you, and you'll start avoiding me because you'll be wondering if I stare at you in the same creepy way I do at him, and it'll be a mess."
Evelyn's heart fluttered in her chest a little at his words.

"Do you stare at me that way?" she asked, afraid to hope.

"Maker's breath, I've said it, haven't I? I'll understand it if you'll want to run away now. Or if you'll chase me away," he told her, wringing his hands awkwardly.

"So you don't prefer the company of men?" she asked gently, trying to disentangle the whole situation.

"I like men. I like women. I'm not sure I can say I prefer one over the other," he confessed in a quiet tone. "I don't say that often. I don't think I've ever said that. I babble about many things, but this... This has not been a thing I've shared like that with someone. Maybe you're some kind of a witch, because you just dragged this whole thing out of me." He laughed nervously. "But now you know and..."

"And it's fine." Trevelyan smiled at him reassuringly. It appeared that it was as easy for him to confide in her, as it was for her to trust him. "I thought that maybe you just like men, since you're still unmarried after all those years, and now I find you staring at Cullen."

"No, not only men. You're very much not a man, and I'm interested in you. Maker, is it hot in here or are those just my cheeks burning?" Alistair tugged at the collar of his jacket. "I'm sorry if I'm making you uncomfortable. It's a talent of mine."

"You're not making me uncomfortable. Why would you say that?" Trevelyan asked in confusion. She was surprised by all that she was learning, but definitely not displeased or uncomfortable.

"So you don't find my interest in you... unpleasant?" His voice was tentative and unsure, and she found it adorable.

"Not in the least. I also find myself... interested in you," she told him timidly.

"You do?" Alistair sounded so excited in that moment that Evelyn couldn't help grinning up at him.

"I do. Which is very confusing, since I've had feelings for Cullen for so long. But he avoids me and doesn't respond when I try to flirt with him, and then he turns around and acts so sweet and charming, and I don't know anymore with him. And now here you are, handsome and funny, and you don't avoid me, and you profess to being interested in me. And I reciprocate that feeling. And maybe that means something, and we could..."

She wasn't sure how to finish that sentence. It all came out in a torrent of words she was afraid to say to anyone before, but now was freely sharing with Alistair. She wasn't sure what was happening to her. What was she doing? What did she want? To jump into bed with a king? To have a short affair while still hoping Cullen would change his mind? To embark on a relationship, and leave Cullen behind? It all sounded wrong. It would not be fair to her, or to Alistair, and perhaps even to Cullen.

"Could we?" Alistair's quiet words were full of anticipation.

Things were much simpler when she thought both men she cared for were unreceptive to her attentions. This situation was a mess.

"I don't know," she told him honestly. "On one hand I would like that, very much, but on the other I feel like I couldn’t fully give my affections to anyone." She bit at her lip nervously as a thought occurred to her. "Maybe you should go after Cullen?" she suggested.
Now that she thought about it, Cullen did seem overly solicitous towards the king. He would stand very close to him, and laugh at his jokes more than she ever heard him do before. Cullen even offered to entertain the king, which he would never do with any other noble. At first Evelyn thought that it was just because Cullen was Fereldan and Alistair was his king, but now she saw those things in a different light. It was possible that Cullen enjoyed the company of men, and if he did, then Alistair was sure to capture his attention.

In that case Alistair would probably be successful, and the two of them could have something. Cullen deserved to be happy, even if only for a while, and if she couldn't be the one to give him that happiness, then someone else should. Even if the thought left her with bitter jealousy, she was ready to put her feelings aside, and encourage Alistair to pursue Cullen.

"No. I wouldn't do that to you," Alistair told her firmly.

Trevelyan couldn't help smiling.

"Thank you for saying that, but if you have a chance, and I don't, then there's no point in debating it. You should try." She felt very noble and magnanimous at that moment, yet it didn't stop her from being unhappy at the prospect in an entirely selfish manner.

"When I was asking if he was yours, I had my suspicions. I thought there might be something between the two of you. The way he looks at you, like you hung the moon - you definitely should not give up on him," Alistair told her.

Evelyn's heart started beating faster. Should she still hold out hope, still try despite numerous defeats? Sometimes she thought Cullen wanted to flirt back, to reach out and touch her, breach that distance that always divided them, but then he never did, and she was left confused. Why would he restrain himself if he wanted her and saw her returning that feeling?

"We don't even know if he likes men," Alistair continued.

That was a good point. Evelyn didn't know anything about Cullen's preferences. He never talked about his love life with her, or anyone else she knew of.

Trevelyan searched the hall for Cullen, and finally saw him... staring at Alistair. When he noticed her eyes on him, the Commander quickly turned his head away, as if guilty.

"Did you just see that?" Evelyn asked the king.

"See what?"

"Cullen was definitely staring at you."

"No he wasn't. He was probably staring at you," Alistair protested.

"Maker, we sound like adolescents." Trevelyan sighed and pinched the bridge of her nose in irritation. It really reminded her of her years back in Ostwick, debating with her friends whether a handsome boy was looking at her or at them, and who should talk to him.

Alistair was suspiciously silent. Evelyn looked up at him and saw a slow grin spread over his face.

"I might have an idea," he told her.

"Out with it then!" she prodded, her interest piqued.
"There's a simple solution to all of that. We're both interested in each other, and in Cullen, and he might return that interest. If we act separately, someone will end up disappointed, but if we team up..."

Now Trevelyan was grinning as well. What he was suggesting was mad. Positively mad. Mad and scandalous. She should be appalled, she should be disabusing him of the notion that such a thing could ever happen. But she wasn't, because those words filled her with excitement. Never in her life had she thought of doing something like that, but once he mentioned it, she couldn't deny the appeal of the images her mind conjured up. Those two men in her bed, touching her, kissing her, taking her together... She wanted it, could hardly breathe as arousal swept through her.

"Do you really think we could do it?" she asked in an awed whisper, hardly believing that she was actually contemplating going forward with such insanity.

"Who could resist the two of us?" Alistair asked.

"Maker, I want to kiss you, you brilliant man," Evelyn told him, giddy. The whole idea was crazy, but then again what in her life was sane? If it succeeded she could have all she wanted - no suffering, no compromises, just joy.

"I've never been accused of being brilliant. But then again I never offered to seduce a man with another person." The king chuckled.

"And the part about the kiss? You won't address that?" Trevelyan asked nervously. She truly meant it - he was never more appealing to her than in that moment when he was offering to embark on this mad journey with her.

"Wasn't that obvious? Maybe I should use my words." He laughed. "If not for all those people here I would be kissing you right now."

A heavy weight seemed to have lifted from her shoulders, and Evelyn grinned. She couldn't get rid of the people, but she could get them a bit of privacy.

"Go through that door, down the corridor, and there will be a small room on the left," Trevelyan told him, indicating the correct path. "I'll join you in five minutes."

Anticipation was building in her stomach as with one nod Alistair strode off, dogging nobles right and left, making for the door. Waiting out the appropriate amount of time, and avoiding being dragged into a conversation herself, was pure torture. Finally she wove her way through the crowd and found herself in the empty corridor, after taking a different set of doors than the one she showed to Alistair. Each of her steps was quicker than the one before. When she opened the correct door, a pair of strong hands wrapped around her waist. In a flash, she was pressed against the doors and the king of Ferelden was kissing her.

It has been far too long since she's been kissed, she decided, opening her mouth to Alistair. The sound he made as his tongue pushed into her mouth made her toes curl. She grabbed at him desperately, at his muscular arms and soft hair, moaning as he kissed down her neck.

"Don't leave a mark," she pleaded.

Alistair obediently moved lower, kissing the skin exposed by the deep v of her dress, licking at the slope of her breasts.

A noise startled both of them, and they stilled.
"Lady Montyliet will be very cross with me if I don't find the Inquisitor," someone said.

"I was tasked with finding the king, and he's also nowhere to be found. We're both in trouble," another person responded.

"Let's split up. You go to the battlements and I'll check the garden," the first voice suggested.

There was the sound of doors opening and feet shuffling. Alistair moved away, no longer touching Evelyn, and she missed his warmth already.

"Thank the Maker they didn't check this room." He breathed out a sigh of relief.

"Who could've imagined that two of the most powerful people in the castle would be hiding together in this cramped place?" Evelyn laughed. "This is rather exciting, but I don't want people to start talking. Especially before we can do anything about the Cullen situation."

It would not serve them to be scrutinized by everyone in Skyhold, watched and judged, of that Trevelyan was sure.

"You're right. We should get back to the party. You go on first. I... uh... might need a moment," Alistair informed her, looking at his shoes.

Trevelyan grinned, her hand boldly running down his chest to the erection tenting his breeches, and giving it a firm stroke, pleased with his reaction to her.

"Evil woman," Alistair groaned.

"Now we socialize, but tomorrow we strategize," Evelyn told him, removing her hand. "Breakfast on my terrace."

They'd need a plan. It would not be as easy as her overly optimistic imagination was telling her at that moment. It would take work. They couldn't walk into the whole thing blindly, unprepared, hoping for the best.

"That's the kind of strategizing I like most." Alistair smirked and swooped down for another long kiss.

"One more moment and we'll be past the point of no return," Trevelyan warned, pulling away, feeling the unmistakable tug of desire, which would soon be all but impossible to deny.

"Go then, if you must," the king agreed, letting go of her.

"Are we mad?" she asked, halfway out the door, the strangeness of the situation hitting her anew. In one evening she’s changed all her notions of what she wanted in her future, deciding to embark on some kind of affair with two men. It was the most insane thing she's ever done, and with her track record that was saying something.

"Definitely. In the best way possible. Now go." Alistair swatted her lightly on the arse, making her giggle and sending her on her way.

Mad, crazy, insane, depraved - they were all of those things, but somehow since they were doing it together, she felt fine. Actually, she couldn't remember the last time she was this excited and hopeful. Without risk there was no reward, and for such a sweet reward the risk had to be great.

The next morning, everything seemed normal for the first few moments after Evelyn woke up, but at
the back of her mind there was a niggling feeling that something has changed.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, shooting up into an upright position, as memories from the previous night returned. Could it all really be true? Her and Alistair and their mad plan? And would he still want to go through with it? She knew that in the harsh light of the day she started to have some doubts.

For now she couldn't think about it too much or she was going to panic. She had to see Alistair and talk about the whole thing.

Her mind made up, Evelyn called for her servants, who started setting up the breakfast table on the balcony, and helped her dress. Feeling bold, she picked a light blue dress with a plunging neckline and an appropriate corset underneath, one which for a change wasn't trying to stab her in the ribs. She would be the first to admit that corsets were minor torture devices, but still she enjoyed the way they accentuated her figure, pushing up her full breast, and tightening her already pronounced waist, making her round hips and generous behind that much more noticeable.

Once she was done with her wardrobe, Evelyn settled behind the table, and began nervously rearranging the plates and decorations, her hands restless. Waiting was always the worst. She touched her hair quickly, making sure that the pins were holding her updo securely. Evelyn kept her honey blond hair long, and making the thick strands submit to her will was always a challenge.

"Sorry to be late," Alistair called to her from the stairs, and she already felt better at hearing his cheerful voice. "You look lovely, as always," he complimented her easily when he reached the table. With a theatrical flourish, he bent down to kiss her hand, his lips soft on her knuckles. "Oooh! Cheeses! So many cheeses!" he enthused, sweeping his eyes over the table. "You know that a way to man's heart is through cheeses."

"You're so easy." Trevelyan laughed, her nerves all but forgotten.

"You wound me terribly," he mock-complained, sitting on the opposite side of the table, and starting to pile slices on his plate. "Maker, I'm sorry - I should've allowed you to go first. All those years of etiquette training, and just the sight of this feast makes me forget all my manners."

"I'm sure you'll find a way to make it up to me." Evelyn winked at him.

"Whatever my lady desires." He grinned at her.

It was so easy, so incredibly easy with him. Why couldn't Cullen be that easy, that open? But then he wouldn't be himself, and for better or worse, she liked him. She liked all of him.

"So you haven't changed your mind?" Trevelyan questioned, picking out some fruit to go with the cheeses. She was reasonably certain of his answer, but still she had to make sure.

"O crs nht," the king mumbled through full mouth. "Have you?" he questioned after swallowing, a slight crease forming between his brows.

"No. I just... I want to do it, but I'm worried. Yesterday we were excited and it seemed such an obvious thing, but now I can see all the dangers and pitfalls more clearly," she explained.

"That's why we strategize - to avoid any problems. Ideas?"

She should argue the point further, explain just how bad things could get, how awkward, how downright ruinous, but for some reason she wanted to finally be reckless, to take what she wanted and damn the consequences. She saved the world from Corypheus - didn't that give her the right to try and pursue some happiness, however strange and unconventional it might be?
"Not really. I just know that we have to be subtle, work slowly, ease him into it," she said.

Their eyes met and they both busted out laughing.

"That's the ultimate goal, isn't it? Easing him in?" Alistair waggled his eyebrows suggestively, making Evelyn's eyes water as she laughed harder.

"We have to be serious," she finally said, wiping her yes. "This thing that we're planning is rather unorthodox, and Cullen's not very... adventurous. We have to have a good strategy."

"All right then." Alistair appeared to have also sobered up. "We can't rush it, but we do have to work quickly. I'm not sure how long I'll be able to stay."

His words made the Inquisitor frown, already thinking about their separation.

"Hey there, no need for that." He grabbed her hand and squeezed her fingers reassuringly. "I'll stall as much as I can, and return as soon as possible. And of course you'll be able to visit as well. You'll get sick of me."

"Never," she told him fiercely, squeezing his hand back. There was no use dwelling on unpleasant thoughts of the distant future. They had to put their heads together and come up with a plan for the next few days.

"We'll see about that." Alistair smiled at her. "Now think. How to go about it? You know Cullen much better than I do. It's actually funny - I've almost met him twice, but it took a Tevinter magister darkspawn trying to destroy the world for the third time to do the trick."

"Almost met him?" Evelyn asked, for a moment forgetting about making plans, and more interested in satisfying her curiosity.

"Yes. One day we got talking about Templar training, and it turned out that he arrived at the refuge just a few months after I left for Grey Warden training. Also, as you probably know, he was there when the abominations attacked, and the Hero of Ferelden saved him. I was traveling with the Hero, but he decided not to take me with him into the tower. He claimed that I wouldn't be objective, seeing as I had a past with people there. I guess he was right, but at the same time now, knowing Cullen, I can't help regretting the fact that I couldn't have been there. Maybe it would've helped, maybe I would've said something, done something that would've eased his pain. It... it's stupid." His voice shook a bit. "I probably would've made it all worse. I'm not good with words. Still, he suffered so much, and knowing that I was close by... Do I make any sense at all? It's nonsense, isn't it?" He laughed, but there was no mirth in the sound.

Evelyn felt her heart clench in her chest. Alistair cared for Cullen, honestly and deeply. It was not just physical attraction. There was a bond between them. It was touching, hearing him speak that way. His sentiments echoed what Trevelyan herself thought often.

"It's not nonsense," she assured him. "I care for him, and when he told me about his past all I wanted to do was soothe his pain, or better yet, go back in time and be there for him when it happened or even prevent it from happening. That's clearly impossible, so I did all I could for him, however little that was. I still feel sadness for the lonely, hurt boy I never knew and couldn't help. As for you, knowing that you actually could've been there, it has to be much worse."

"Thank you."

They looked at each other for a moment, and it struck Trevelyan just how connected they were, how similar. Over that rather short time Alistair managed to develop feelings for Cullen that could match
hers. They couldn't change the past, but together they could make Cullen's future a bit better.

If only she could think of a way to begin. What would make Cullen happy? What did he enjoy doing?

"I might have an idea," she said suddenly, a plan forming in her mind.

Chapter End Notes

From the moment I saw that Alistair/Cullen/Trevelyan was a thing, I knew that I desperately needed it in my life. I just never thought I'd be actually writing it. I blame it all on one of my professors. His class was just the most boring thing ever, and his voice is the cure for insomnia. My mind usually wondered when he droned on, and one day I just thought "wouldn't it be interesting if the relationship between Alistair, Cullen and Trevelyan was a three-way from the start? wouldn't it be fun to see Alistair and Trevelyan pursuing Cullen, romancing him?" I decided that it was a good idea, but I would never write it, since it would be long and hard. Despite that, the thought was implanted in my brain, and it would not leave me be. Day after day I kept imagining things they could be doing, and then one night it was just too much, and I had to give up and start writing. I have 16 chapters planned, and half of them are already written, but they still need more work. It's already over 40k long, so this is not going to be short by any stretch of the imagination.

This is a bit different from my usual fare, so I hope it still is/will be enjoyable. Comments and kudos would be much appreciated.
Cullen sat at his desk, staring blankly at a letter in front of him. He kept rereading one line over and over, not able to grasp the meaning behind the words. It was rather shameful how distracted he was.

Shameful. That was a good word. It was not just his inability to focus on a simple message that was making him ashamed. His feelings shamed him. The Maker was testing him and he was proving unworthy.

But how much could one man handle, truly?

His first temptation was the Inquisitor, beautiful and kind, but also strong, sharp-tongued and seductive. He couldn't understand why she would pay any attention to him. To her, he was not just the Commander - she treated him like a friend, or perhaps even more. She flirted with him since they first met. At the beginning it was rather subtle, but then she became more direct, bolder. He tried not to respond, not to stare at her, not to encourage her. He was unworthy of her, would only be a hindrance to her if anything were to develop between them.

He knew he'd made the right decision in resisting her charms, but sometimes he would catch her looking at him, sadness plain on her face, and it hurt him to know that he was disappointing her, causing her pain. He kept reminding himself that in the long run she would be grateful to him for not dragging her into his pitiful life, but in the moment when her blue eyes flickered with sorrow, that rationalization was of little help.

After he told her about the Ferelden Circle and Kirkwall and his lyrium withdrawal he thought she would leave him be, yet she didn't. It didn't seem to make a difference to her. She was as attentive and sweet as ever, looking at him just like before, like she still saw only good in him, and not the dark stains on his soul. She was supportive and eager to help, and still flirtatious, as if nothing has changed.

That was bad enough. Months and months of resisting the most desirable woman he's ever met, knowing that he could be with her, but denying himself. And then king Alistair came to Skyhold and it was all so much worse. The king was honorable and funny and... handsome, so handsome it was not fair. Cullen hated himself for thinking about him in that way. Alistair Theirin was his monarch. Not to mention just the simple fact that he was a man. And Cullen was a man as well. It was wrong to think the thoughts Cullen thought about him. Wrong, depraved and sinful.

And what did it say about him that despite having strong feelings for Evelyn, he could still follow the king around the castle like a mabari puppy, staring at him in mute admiration? How could he be so strongly attracted to two people at the same time?

His dreams, bleeding into his daily fantasies, shamed him the most. The three of them, together. Sometimes in the most indecent situations, and other times in completely innocent ones, but always together. That was not done. That was not right or proper. His leader and his king, a woman and a man. He prayed and prayed for the thoughts to go away, but they persisted.

The final nail in his coffin was the fact that king Alistair and Evelyn were growing closer and closer to each other, spending more and more time together, sharing private jokes, sneaking around the castle in the night. He should be glad for them, and for himself. That solved all his problems,
removed them from his orbit. And still he was jealous, resentful of the fact that they could find happiness in each other so simply, while for him it was all a struggle.

The previous night he watched them, whispering some sweet secrets back and forth, departing one after the other and then returning at a similar time. He was saddened to think that Evelyn’s interest in him was vanishing, that she found someone to replace him. Which was absurd. He tried not to give her hope, not to lead her on, wanted her to find someone worthy, and now she did. The king himself - who could be better? And yet, Cullen couldn't help feeling slightly betrayed.

He was also sad at the thought that the king would never look at him as anything other than his subject, or perhaps a military leader. Even friendship was out of the question, not to mention more unsavory things. He should be glad that the object of his sinful desire was so unavailable to him, but it was a strange disappointment.

Underneath all this sadness there was lust, rearing its' ugly head. He thought of those two people he’s grown to care for, in some dark corridor, touching, kissing, their voices mingled in sounds of pleasure. He imagined walking in on them, being accepted, embraced by them...

A knock at his doors startled him.

"Come in," he called out, shuffling the papers strewn over his desk, needing to look busy.

The sight that greeted him when the doors fell open made him swallow nervously. It was as if his disgraceful thoughts summoned their objects to his office. There they were - the king and the Inquisitor, smiling at him brightly, her arm in the crook of his.

"Good morning, Cullen," the king greeted him, closing the doors behind himself and Evelyn.

"Good morning, Your Majesty," Cullen responded, thrilled to hear his name coming from the monarch's mouth.

"You must stop this 'Your Majesty' nonsense. I keep telling you to call me Alistair," the king insisted.

He did ask Cullen to do that, but he tried to remain distanced and respectful.

"It took me weeks to convince him to call me by name," the Inquisitor said.

It was true. He resisted, but she pleaded with him so sweetly that he couldn't deny her. That veneer of professionalism was erased and he came that much dangerously closer to her, loving the sound of her voice when she said his name in turn.

"Then he already has practice with ignoring titles." The king smiled at him.

"As Your Maj... As you wish, Alistair," Cullen conceded helplessly.

"Grand." Alistair's smile only broadened, and it did terrible things to Cullen, making his stomach feel strangely fluttery.

"We were hoping to steal you away from your duties for a while," Evelyn told him, moving away from Alistair, and perching on Cullen’s desk, the glorious curve of her hip right in front of his face.

"Unfortunately I'm rather busy," Cullen lied. Being around them together was always confusing and he didn't need that.
"That's why you're reading a letter upside-down?" Evelyn asked innocently.

Indeed, when he shuffled his papers, he placed one in front of himself the wrong side up. He felt a flush creeping up his neck.

"It doesn't look like anything important," Evelyn observed, leaning down to read the letter, giving him a perfect view of her ample bosom, transfixing him.

"Join us for a game of chess, then," Alistair suggested.

Cullen lifted his head to look at the other man, who was smirking slightly. Did he notice Cullen staring at Evelyn's breasts? Maker, that would be mortifying.

"Please join us," Evelyn said.

Those words... In his dreams he heard them in a different context, but Evelyn's voice was now as husky as in his imagination.

"How can we all play chess? It's a game for two people," he protested.

"We can take turns, two people playing, while the third watches, and then switch," Alistair explained.

"Or we can play all together, two against one," Evelyn suggested.

Was it just in his head or did Evelyn and Alistair share a glance and an odd smile? Cullen wasn't sure about anything anymore. What he did know was that when they turned to look at him, eyes imploring, he couldn't say no.

"To the garden then?" he asked, giving up.

They both beamed at him, and he knew he was lost. Lost in their smiles, lost in their radiant faces, lost forever, because he would do anything to make them happy.

Once they reached their destination, he noticed that it was completely deserted. Usually there was a lot of people milling around, chatting or relaxing, but now there wasn't a single person in sight.

"Peace and quiet are essential for chess," Evelyn said, answering Cullen's unspoken question.

"And that way no-one will even think about eating the cheese." Alistair indicated the table with refreshments.

They went to a lot of trouble. It all look strangely intimate, like something set up for lovers to enjoy. Why would they invite him to join them?

"So how will we do it?" Evelyn asked, cutting into his thoughts.

"I'm by far the worst player, and from what you've told me, our dear Commander is the best, so I think I should have his help against you," Alistair suggested.

They've been talking about him? It made Cullen's heart race a bit. Then reality set in. He was indeed rather good at the game, so they probably only required his expertise in this area. It made him feel foolish for getting excited.

"Is that acceptable to you, Cullen?" Evelyn questioned, turning to him.
"As you wish, Inquisitor," he answered in a clipped tone.

"Hey!" She walked up to him, staring up at him defiantly. "No more of this Inquisitor nonsense when we're alone. We thought you could use a break. We want you to have fun. If you're here just because you think you have to, then I'm here to tell you that you can go." There was a brief flash of hurt on her face.

"I... No... I want to be here. It's just that I thought... Never mind." He hated the uncertainty he felt, the awkward way in which he spoke to them, the fact that he doubted their intentions. It was all a mess.

"Good." Evelyn smiled at him. "Let's start then."

"We'll show her no mercy, right Cullen?" Alistair said boldly after they settled down on the opposite sides of the board.

"None whatsoever," Cullen responded, surprised at how easily it came out, after his previous bumbling.

"You'll be worn out and begging for mercy by the time we're done with you," Alistair told Evelyn, smirking.

"That's what I'm hoping for," she purred.

Those words, coupled with their low voices and mysterious smiles, made Cullen think that they weren't talking about chess. Maybe it was him, his perversion making him imagine the innuendo, the indecent suggestion behind their banter, but Maker, it sounded like they were thinking about a different kind of game.

"Ladies first," Cullen said, eager to end the conversation and start playing.

"That has always been my rule as well." Alistair smirked slightly.

Evelyn pressed her lips together, trying not to smile. That was certainly telling. Cullen’s mind was invaded by thoughts of those two beautiful people together, Evelyn moaning under Alistair's ministrations, Alistair gasping as Evelyn touched him. He wasn't sure if he was more jealous or aroused, or who he was jealous of. This was a new level of confusion and discomfort.

A warm hand on his arm made him return to the present.

"Hellooo! Are you there, Cullen?" Alistair questioned. "I think I can manage an opening move, but I'd rather have your opinion."

Focusing on the board and not the pleasant sensation of Alistair touching him, Cullen nodded his head when the king indicated a piece he wanted to start with.

To his relief, they played for some time without anything even remotely sexual being said. Evelyn and Alistair teased and goaded each other, but it was entirely friendly.

"Left. No, your other left," Cullen directed, seeing Alistair struggle to find a correct spot for the piece he settled on. "Not there," he protested.

Without thinking much, he grabbed Alistair's hand to move the piece to the right place. The moment their bare fingers touched there was a strange spark and Cullen almost gasped. Quickly disposing of the piece, he let go. He couldn't even look at Alistair for fear the king was going to read something
on his reddened face. Instead he focused on the board, and Evelyn's next move.

After a few more uneventful turns, Evelyn paused, seeming to consider her next maneuver very carefully. Appearing to be deep in thought, she leaned over the board, her arms pressing to the sides of her breasts, her cleavage on full display. Cullen's eyes were hopelessly drawn to that sight.

"The lady doesn't play fair," Alistair chided. Was he as distracted as Cullen? Or did the king noticed him staring?

Guiltily, Cullen looked away.

"All's fair in chess and war," Evelyn told them, grinning and making a move.

"I think you mean Wicked Grace and war," Alistair corrected.

"That too," she agreed. "Oooh." She clapped her hands in delight. "I know what we must do! We must play Wicked Grace together."

"I've sworn off cards," Cullen protested. And even if he hadn't, he wasn't sure he could handle playing with the two of them.

"Our Commander once lost to Josie and had to strip completely. It was a sight to behold." Evelyn fanned herself with her hand, and Cullen felt himself blushing. He knew she had to find him attractive, but hearing it in such a blatant manner pleased him, and made the embarrassment almost worth it.

"That's something I'd like to see," Alistair responded, moving a piece casually.

Cullen's face felt like it was engulfed by flames, it was so hot. Did he hear that right? Did the king wish to see him naked? Or maybe he just wanted to see Cullen embarrassed?

"Don't worry Cullen, last time I didn't play because I'm quite abysmal at the game, but now I would risk it, so you wouldn't be the worst player." Evelyn leaned over the board, moving a piece of her own, giving him another perfect view of her cleavage. Cullen was definitely not thinking about how those breasts would look bare. Definitely not.

"I'm terrible at Wicked Grace as well," Alistair told them. "It will be perfectly fair. Any of us could win. Or lose."

"Shall we play then? Cullen?" Evelyn prompted.

He was hypnotized by her. Her smile, the mischief in her eyes. This was a colossally bad idea, but she made him consider it.

"I'm not certain it's wise," he said tentatively.

"It's not wise. It's wicked." Cullen felt a shiver pass through him at the way Alistair said the word.

"Please, Cullen, say you'll play with us," Evelyn implored, batting her eyelashes.

"Yes, Cullen, pleease," Alistair joined in.

He couldn't quite respond. It felt like what was asked of him was more than a game of cards. Or maybe it was just his imagination.

"Do we have to go down on our knees and beg?" Evelyn asked, since Cullen remained in stupefied
"Because we will, if that's what it takes," Alistair added.

Cullen was not imagining the Inquisitor and king of Ferelden on their knees, before him, *he was not*. Full lips parting, lazy smiles, tongues darting out. He was *not* imagining them… He choked on his own saliva, coughing violently.

"There, there." Alistair clapped him on the back, while Evelyn moved from the board, returning with a glass of water. Cullen drank it gratefully, still feeling Alistair's hand on his back, while Evelyn also placed her palm on his arm, rubbing it soothingly.

"Better now?" she asked.

"Yes, thank you."

"Will you agree to play with us now? We just saved your life, you know," Alistair said.

"I will."

Why did he say that? It was stupid and risky, but he looked from Alistair to Evelyn and their brilliant smiles made him think that somehow everything was just as it was supposed to be.

After he agreed to this mad idea, Evelyn returned to her seat, and they resumed playing as if nothing happened.

In the end he and Alistair came out victorious.

"Next time I want Cullen on my side," Evelyn declared, pouting prettily.

"As you wish. We can both use his skills," Alistair agreed magnanimously, and Cullen was again left with the distinct feeling that this was all about more than chess. The idea was too outlandish to consider. "You don't mind if we share you, do you Cullen?" Or was it?

"I can see that Alistair is an excellent partner, but I promise to be very good and obedient," Evelyn murmured, making Cullen realize that he didn't say anything in response.

"I'll be glad to assist either of you," he finally managed to choke out.

"Great! And the time after that I and Alistair will try to beat you, and probably fail miserably," Evelyn said.

How many times did they want to play? Was this supposed to be a regular thing? What did they wanted? Was this friendship? Or... No. He couldn't even hope. But even if it was what he madly desired, he could never do such a thing.

"I've been neglecting my work for far too long." He needed some space, time to think, so he got up from the board.

"What about the food? Aren't you hungry?" Evelyn asked.

"Not particularly. I must go." He bowed to them formally and retreated quickly.
"This was almost too easy." Evelyn smiled, pouring wine.

"The part about kneeling was downright inspired," Alistair praised, walking up to her and accepting a glass.

"You followed my lead perfectly," Trevelyan returned the compliment. "And now we know what the first thing we do to him will be."

They both grinned.

"Maker, just think about the expression on his face when he sees us kneeling before him," Alistair whispered, clearly entranced by the thought.

"And the sounds he'll be making. The way he'll shake and groan," Evelyn added. "Are you as aroused as I am?" she asked, putting the untouched glass down on the table.

"Yeees." Alistair also put away his glass, crowding Trevelyan into the table, his large frame towering over her. His mouth was hovering over hers. She almost closed the gap between them, when the sound of doors opening made them jump apart.

"Lady Inquisitor?" one of the servants called out.

"Yes?" Evelyn answered, sighing.

"Lady Josephine saw Commander Cullen leaving and wanted to know if we could start letting people back into the garden. She also wished to remind you that you have a large backlog of unanswered letters."

"Maker's breath," Trevelyan muttered, displeased with the interruption.

"I should probably attend to some of my duties as well," Alistair told her.

"But what about..." Evelyn asked in a quiet tone, gesturing between them.

"We'll meet in the evening. You're the sneaky rogue here - sneak into my room."

"Lady Inquisitor?" The servant was probably eager to be done with his task.

"Let everyone back in. And tell Josie the letters will be answered," Trevelyan responded reluctantly, not looking forward to attending to her tedious correspondence when she could’ve been kissing Alistair instead.

"As you wish, my lady," the servant said, before closing the doors again.

Evelyn picked up her glass and drained it in one quick gulp.

"That was impressive." Alistair chuckled.

"It's going to be a long day. I needed that," Trevelyan answered tersely.

The day was indeed long. The letters felt even more boring than usually when compared to what Trevelyan could’ve been doing instead of answering them.
The morning, on the other hand, was very encouraging. Cullen's reactions were beyond what Evelyn could’ve wished them to be. He was probably a bit confused, but a few more meetings like that one, and he was bound to understand.

Fortunately, the day was coming to a close, and Evelyn found herself stealthily creeping over the roof, her back pressed to the wall, as she maneuvered to Alistair's room. When she reached it, she rapped on the windowpane, and in moments the window was opened and a pair of strong hands pulled her inside.

She didn't even have time for a greeting, because as soon as she was in, Alistair was kissing her. With a blissful sigh she allowed herself to melt into his body, letting the sensation of his mouth moving on hers overtake her. He held her close, their bodies flush. It was only their second kiss, but it felt perfectly natural. They were in tune with one another as if they've been together for years.

A gust of cold wind made Trevelyan shiver. Alistair must have felt it too, because he let go of her to close the window.

"A very good evening to you," Evelyn said in a husky whisper.

"I was beginning to lose hope you were coming." There was something vulnerable in his tone, even if he tried to hide it, and Trevelyan embraced him, hoping it was reassurance enough.

"I couldn't wait to get here, but the Inquisitor's work is never over."

Alistair responded to her words with a heavy sigh.

"A king's work also isn't ever over. There's something I have to tell you.” He paused, looking away, making Evelyn’s heart climb into her throat as worry overtook her. “I'll be leaving soon."

Evelyn moved away from him, shocked.

"Leaving? When? For how long? When will you be back?" She threw question after question at him. "You will be back, won't you?"

"Of course I'll be back." The king cupped her cheek and smiled at her. "Does it mean that you'll miss me?"

"Yes, you silly man, I'll miss you madly."

Pleased with her answer, Alistair bent down to kiss her again. Trevelyan allowed it for a moment, but then pushed him away gently.

"When are you leaving?" she repeated her previous question.

"Tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow?! This is just terrible," Evelyn despaired. "Why now? What's so important all of a sudden?"

"There's some kind of land dispute between two noble families, because a border river has changed its course. Don't even ask me how that's happened. They're squabbling over a few meters of grass, but of course only I, the mighty king," he put on a comically exaggerated tone of voice, making Trevelyan giggle, "can solve this grave problem. It shouldn't take more than a week, two at most if Arl Tegan decides to drag me to sit judgment in a nearby town."
"I wish I could tell you to get everything over and done with quickly, but I'm not that selfish. You have to do it all properly, justly," Trevelyan conceded. She would never allow herself to make things difficult for Alistair, guilt him into rushing when he had to be responsible and put his subject’s needs before his own desires. “It's a shame you have to go right now, just after we've started putting our plan into action."

That was troublesome. They would never make any headway if their actions weren’t consistent and regular. But what were they to do? She was sure that Alistair wasn’t going willingly, and instead was forced to depart.

"If it drags on too long I'll just have to tell those nobles that there's a beautiful woman and a handsome man who are withering away without me and I must attend to them," Alistair offered. "Just think of the scandal." Trevelyan laughed. "'Ladies and gentlemen, your king needs to get laid, deal with your river yourselves.'"

Alistair chuckled.

"There's just one thing you can do to make this trip worth our while," Evelyn told him, feeling an inspiration coming to her.

"What do you have in mind?" Alistair asked, quirking a brow at her.

"A gift, your majesty."

"What is it that my lady desires? Precious stones? Luxurious dresses? Exotic flowers?"

"Exotic flowers in Ferelden?" Trevelyan looked at him skeptically. "It's not a gift for me. It's for Cullen."

"And what could our Commander want?" The king tapped a finger against his lip in a gesture of deep thought.

"What does every Fereldan want?"

"A pretty Free Marcher of his own?" Alistair grabbed her arse, pulling her to him, smiling dangerously.

"You don't have to go away to get one of those, but I would not object to being presented to Cullen with just a bow on me." Evelyn rubbed up against his hard body, her hands landing on his arms.

"If it's not that, then..." He stopped kneading her arse. "A mabari. It should've been obvious."

"Yes. He won't be able to resist the people who bought him a puppy."

"You are quite brilliant."

"So I've been told."

That was quite enough of talking. Trevelyan was not happy about Alistair’s departure, but there was nothing to be done about it. All she could do was make the best of the time that was left, so she went up on her toes and pressed her lips to his. Alistair responded enthusiastically, pushing her into the wall, his hands at her sides, one nearing her breast, the other on her stomach. His explorations were rather tentative, so Evelyn moved his hand to fully grasp her breast.

"You don't have to be so gentlemanly with me. I want you," she told him, breaking the kiss for a
moment, before diving back again to taste his mouth.

Emboldened by her words, Alistair squeezed her breast, and started working on the fastenings of her pants. Now Trevelyan regretted having changed. She couldn't very well prance around the roofs in her dress, but it would have been ever so much easier to lift up a skirt than it was to undo the laces of her breeches.

Alistair didn't seem to mind having to work on the fastenings, and soon his thick fingers were slipping into her smalls and parting her folds. Evelyn moaned at the first teasing contact. The sound made Alistair grin smugly against her lips. Not to be outdone, she made quick work of his belt and laces and started stroking over his impressive length, causing him to buck into her hand and gasp. She was about to suggest they moved to the bed, when there was a knock on the doors. This was some kind of a curse, she decided, since they've been interrupted three times in the last twenty four hours.

"Alistair, we have to talk about the schedule for tomorrow," Arl Teagan said through the doors. Evelyn felt Alistair soften in her hand, his fingers stilling.

"I'm busy," he called out.

"It won't take long. Let's get it over with so I can go to bed," his advisor cajoled.

"Give me fifteen minutes."

Trevelyan lifted a brow, to which Alistair responded by shrugging.

"What are you doing that can't possibly wait?"

Evelyn felt a deep burning desire to murder arl Teagan.


"I'll be back shortly," came the exasperated response.

They waited for the sounds of the arl's footsteps to quiet before resuming their frantic touching.

"Is Important Things Trevelyan my new name?" Evelyn teased, pumping Alistair's cock back into hardness.

"I'm sorry..." He paused his sentence to groan as she twisted her wrist slightly.

"It will be an amusing sto-ory." Trevelyan's breath hitched when Alistair pinched her nipple and the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex at the same time.

"We will be telling this story to Cullen then?"

"Naturally."

It was strange. It felt almost as if he were in the room with them, just by virtue of his name being invoked. Evelyn imagined him watching them. Would he be able to be just a spectator for long or would he join them immediately?

Alistair's mouth on hers made her return to the here and now. She kissed him back fiercely, her tongue invading his mouth. They didn't have much time. Fortunately Alistair was already leaking precome, and she was also close.
"When you get back you'll fuck me properly," she said, breaking the kiss.

"Yesss." Alistair shivered.

"Say it." She needed to hear him make her a promise in that deep voice of his.

"I'll fuck you, I'll fuck you until you scream," he growled.

Just hearing him say it made Trevelyan tumble over the edge, her body shaking with pleasure. She kissed him desperately to muffle the sounds. Almost at the same time she felt Alistair come, gasping into her mouth, his seed dripping down on her hand.

"That was... wow," he said when they both stilled.

"Just wait until I get my mouth on your cock," Evelyn whispered, removing her hand from his pants and licking it clean.

"Maker's breath." Alistair watched her with rapt attention, a light redness staining his cheeks.

Shamelessly, Trevelyan guided his own hand to his mouth and smirked when he hummed in appreciation as he sucked her juices from his fingers.

"Better change those pants," she advised, refastening her own garments.

"Right. Yes. That's what I'll do."

He kissed her quickly and their tastes mingled in their mouths for a moment, before the king moved to his wardrobe.

"Wait. Am I the royal mistress now?" Evelyn asked when the thought occurred to her, thrilling her.

"I suppose. Which makes me what? The Inquisitor's squeeze?"

He shot her a quick grin, but Trevelyan was soon distracted by the sight of his firm arse and powerful thighs as he changed. Her hands itched to touch them. Noticing her interest he wiggled his behind slightly, making her laugh. She was about to go to him and grab a perfect cheek in her hand, when she heard the sound of footsteps outside.

"I'll miss you," she whispered urgently, and not waiting for his response, opened the window and started running over the roof, feeling giddy. She was indeed going to miss him terribly, but when he got back... The things they were going to do, just the two of them, and then the three of them. She was grinning madly at the thought.

Chapter End Notes

That's the chapter in which I could employ one of my favorite devices - pornshadowing. Now you know what to expect in the future. Whether that's a promise or a warning is entirely up to you.

Also, fun fact, or whatever you might call that, whenever I'm psyching myself up for writing/posting this story, I listen to No guilt in pleasure by MS MR - a perfect song for anything smut related.
Reviews and kudos are always appreciated. I need to know that someone's benefiting from my descent into insanity.
The puppy

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The past ten days were... odd. Since that day in the garden, since that chess game that seemed like more than it was on the surface, Cullen felt like something has shifted, changed irrevocably. It should have been frightening, it was frightening, and yet...

No. It was all wrong. Wrong and impossible, and he couldn't stop thinking about it. Them. Those two people who took over his mind, who lived in his imagination permanently, who appeared whenever he closed his eyes.

There was a sense of anticipation in him. He was waiting for something. For proof that he was not delusional, for a chance to see... No. He should not wish that. He should not want to have to make a choice. Or maybe he should? Maybe he should be strong enough to say no, to prove to himself that he knew right from wrong.

It was madness to think that the king of Ferelden and the Inquisitor would wish to be with him. Evelyn did have some interest in him once, but she had to have moved on. She had Alistair now, and what more could she wish for? And as to what concerned the monarch, it was almost treasonous to think that he could have any interest in men. It was wrong to think of Alistair as a man, and to think of men as...

Maker help him, it was always in him, he knew. This horrid confusion. Even when he was a young Templar in training he could find something captivating in both women and men. He tried to deny it, pretend it wasn't there. The Chantry taught that it was wrong for men to desire other men, and he trusted the Chantry. There was no denying that he liked women. It was reassuring to see a pretty serving girl bending down and be immediately distracted by her cleavage. But as soon as he was comfortable again, convinced that he imagined his sinful interest in men, he would catch a fellow recruit smiling at him and that would make him blush.

What was true?, he wondered. Which feeling? They were not the same. They were distinctly different. One was said to be right and one to be wrong, but that was not the primary difference. He couldn't put it in words. It was something intangible, inexplicable, and yet undeniable.

He still remembered all those long sleepless nights during which he tried to disentangle his feelings, to make sense of them. His palms were sweaty, his stomach twisted into knots, and the fear threatened to choke him. He felt wrong, fundamentally wrong. He couldn't take it. Finally, one night he made a decision. He wouldn't think about it anymore. Whatever he was, whatever terrible truth resided at the bottom of his soul, he would not acknowledge it. He buried that unexplored part of himself deep, put a wall in his mind, keeping the sinful thoughts behind it.

When he got older, he started noticing that things were done in the circles, that some of his fellow templars were close as brothers, yet not brotherly in their affections. For some of them it was only a passing diversion, but others had deep feelings. They cared for one another, just like any other couple. He started to wondered how could it be wrong, how could love be wrong? He treated those templars like all the others. It was not his business. There was an inkling in him that maybe the Chantry had it wrong.

It was not easy for those templar couples. People knew about them, but acted as if they didn’t. They had to hide, pretend, and if they fell out of line, revealed too much, they were punished, separated,
perhaps forever.

Cullen didn't need more complications in his life. Besides, he was not like them, he kept reminding himself. At times that wall in his mind cracked, and thoughts that disturbed his equilibrium slipped out to the forefront, but he pushed them back down. On the outside he would be ordinary, normal, he would be just like the Chantry and the rest of the world wished him to be. That was all that mattered.

It was strangely comforting sometimes to realize that he shouldn't pursue any relationships, that he was not worthy of love, that he was too broken to be a good partner for anyone. It took away the pressure, made life simple and stable.

When he met her, Evelyn shook the foundations of his beliefs. At every turn she showed how much she cared, how much his past, his mistakes didn't matter to her. Pushing her away took everything he had in him. And now came Alistair and that old confusion resurfaced, sharper than before, more pressing. He couldn’t control his thoughts like he used to, and even the control over his actions, the last vestige of his defense against any impropriety, was slipping away from him. And the worst part was that at times he wanted to just let go, to...

"Cuuullen!"

His head jerked up from his desk, making him realize that his forehead has been resting on a stack of papers. Evelyn stood in the doors, smiling brightly, scattering his deep thoughts.

"Is everything alright?" she asked, probably noticing his tormented expression.

"Just tired," Cullen lied, trying to fix a smile on his face. There was no need to worry Evelyn.

"Alistair is back," she said. Cullen knew that. He didn't come out to greet the king, he was somehow not ready for that, but he was aware of his presence. "He's brought someone we want you to meet."

"Who is it?" Cullen questioned.

Was it some military strategist who wanted to talk with him? Or some horrid noble?

No. They would not force another noble on him.

"It's a surprise."

Cullen was not a fan of surprises. He hated uncertainty, and they were essentially that, only painted as something pretty, and because of that, laden with expectations, bound to disappoint. Despite that, when he looked at Evelyn's glowing smile, he couldn't help returning it.

"Come with me," she said, and started walking, not looking back, forcing him to get up and follow.

"Where are we going?" he wanted to know.

"Just a bit further. Better close your eyes."

Cullen hesitated.

"Trust me, you'll like it," Evelyn reassured.

How could he deny her when she smiled at him like this? It couldn't hurt, so Cullen closed his eyes. He was expecting her to lead him using just her voice, but instead she grabbed his hand. It felt tiny in his, delicate and soft. That small contact was overwhelmingly pleasant. He could grow addicted to it, to walking with her like this, feeling her skin, having her run her thumb over his knuckles like it was
the most natural thing in the world.

He wasn't sure where they were going. Somewhere on the ramparts, he knew that much, but the rest was a mystery, yet with her hand in his, he couldn't care very much about the destination. As far as he was concerned they could walk like this forever, stuck in a perfect moment.

Finally they stopped and Evelyn let go of his hand.

"You can open your eyes now," she told him.

As soon as he did, he saw Alistair sitting on the ground, a golden-brown mabari puppy in his arms.

"Attack," the king told the dog playfully, letting it go and giving it a little push.

As soon as it was free, the puppy ran straight for Cullen. Without thinking, he crouched down and reached for the dog. It started sniffing and licking at his hands, and Cullen couldn't help laughing. It was still tiny but very playful and energetic, its brown eyes full of intelligence.

Almost on instinct, Cullen held it up and pressed it to his chest, stroking its short fur. The puppy appeared happy, his tongue lolling out, contented sighs escaping its open mouth.

"Do you like her?" Alistair's question made Cullen's head snap up. He completely ignored the king in favor of playing with a dog. What was he thinking?

"Your majesty." Cullen stood up, still holding the puppy.

"Come now. I thought we were over that. The name's Alistair."

"Yes. Right. Alistair." He should feel stupid, but somehow with Alistair he couldn't. "She's a beauty. And she'll make a brave warrior when she'll be grown."

"What will you call her?" Alistair asked.

"Name her?" Cullen was shocked for a moment. "She's mine?" He knew he sounded like a boy, full of wonder and incredulity.

"Of course. She's the surprise. The gift," Evelyn explained.

Cullen felt swift joy overtake him, followed by confusion. What to name that precious little thing? He'd never had to name anything before, and now he was at a lose.

"I have no idea what to call her," he admitted.


"That does have a nice ring to it," Cullen agreed. He lifted the puppy up and looked it in the eye. "Are you an Amadora?" He asked the mabari.

The dog barked happily.

"I think she likes it," Alistair said.

"Yes, she does." Cullen smiled, pressing the puppy to his chest.

Evelyn and Alistair walked up to him and started petting the puppy, who was focused on Cullen, looking at him, and licking his hand.
"Thank you," Cullen said, looking from his king to his Inquisitor, who were now standing right next to him, both grinning. "You have no idea how much this means to me."

And it was true. He’s never received a gift like that. He was used to receiving practical things - books or garments, but this was something entirely different. This was only meant to make him happy.

He’s never had friends like this, who would think to do something like that.

That was what they were, he realized - his friends. Whatever else would or would not happen, he considered them friends, and they had to feel the same way. That thought made him smile even harder.

"One of the best Fereldans without a mabari. I couldn't stand for that," Alistair told him.

"Best?" Did he hear that right? To think that his king would speak so highly of him was humbling. Now the feeling of joy was accompanied by pride.

"Don't be so modest. You're the commander of the armies that defeated Corypheus - if that doesn't qualify you as one of the bravest, most valiant Fereldans, then I don't know what does."

Cullen couldn't quite believe it, but he soaked up the praise, feeling his cheeks redden with pleasure.

"Besides," Alistair continued, "I'd like you even if you were an Orlesian."

That was too much, that was... Cullen just blushed harder.

"What he meant to say was 'you're welcome'," Evelyn interjected. "We wanted to make you happy and I think we succeeded."

"I..." Cullen choked up again, overcome with feeling. He still couldn’t quite believe that those two amazing people cared for him and wanted to bring him joy. How could this have happened to him? "I'm touched," he finishes lamely.

"No you aren't. But now you're touched," Evelyn corrected, putting her arm around his back, pressing herself into him. In a moment Alistair also had his arm over Cullen's shoulder.

He had his arms full of squirming puppy so he couldn't very well embrace them, and he wasn't sure he would know how to if he could. They were so close, their smells surrounding him, and it felt intimate. It was probably just friendly, as evidenced by the fact that they pulled back very quickly, but it thrilled and terrified him in a very non-platonic way.

"Another game of chess then?" Alistair offered.

"Why not." Cullen couldn't say no to them.

"The last time you two completely dominated me. Not that I didn't enjoy it thoroughly," Evelyn smiled, and something in Cullen's gut twitched, "but now the Commander is on my side. We'll bring you to your knees, Your Highness."

"It will be my pleasure," the king said boldly, despite the redness on his cheeks.

Once again Cullen was not thinking about Alistair on his knees, Alistair being happy in that position, Alistair's smirking mouth parting to... He had to snap out of it. It was beyond inappropriate. He could almost swear that they were doing that on purpose.
Once they started playing it was Alistair, not Cullen, distracted by Evelyn's cleavage, but Cullen wasn't completely free from her influence. He had Dori on his lap and Evelyn kept petting the puppy, her hand occasionally slipping to his thigh. At first it seemed an accident, but as it progressed, Cullen started to believe that it was not a completely innocent gesture.

Evelyn also made sure to whisper in his ear, ostensibly to consult a move, her mouth almost brushing his flesh, her breath making him shiver. Did she wanted to make Alistair jealous? It would be beneath her dignity, Cullen knew, but the thought crept into his mind. Except Alistair didn't look displeased at their interactions. Quite the opposite. He kept smiling at them.

So maybe Evelyn and Alistair weren't a couple? Or they were and wanted to... No. He was being absurd.

The game ended just as expected, with Cullen and Evelyn victorious. Alistair pretended to be angry, saying disparaging things to the pieces on the board, claiming that they betrayed him, making Cullen and Evelyn laugh.

Cullen should have returned to his duties, but Alistair and Evelyn insisted that he had to have dinner with them, and in the end he agreed. The king kept stealing the best pieces from both Cullen and Evelyn's plates, and they tried to fight him off, which turned into the three of them having a sword fight with their knives, laughing all the while.

When it was over, and he was back in his office, Cullen couldn't quite believe everything that's happened. He felt so comfortable with those two, he's never laughed so much in his entire life, never felt so... happy. That was the word. He was happy. It was a strange sensation. He could ruin it by overanalyzing it, thinking of his sinful desires, looking too far into the future, but for once he decided to let himself feel good, and leave the worrying for another day. Besides, how could he dwell on the unpleasantness of life when there was a tiny mabari snoring on his lap?

Creeping over the roofs at night, with only the moon illuminating her way, was now familiar to Evelyn. The day couldn't have gone more perfectly, but it was about to get even better. The window was already unlocked, and when she slipped inside, she saw Alistair reclined on the bed, wearing only a pair of breeches.

"Wasting no time I see." She grinned at him, surveying the hard planes of his body, the perfectly sculpted muscles, covered in a sparse trail of hair. The fact that he had to wear clothes at all was a crime. That magnificence should never be hidden from the world.

"Is it too forward?" He started lifting up.

"No, silly, I'm very eager for you to fulfill your promise," Evelyn told him, walking quickly to the bed and kneeling on the mattress.

"Good, good. I don't want to presume..."

"Don't take it the wrong way, but with Cullen you are much more confident and sure, and when it's just the two of us you're kind of uncertain, in a perfectly adorable way." Trevelyan noticed the difference before, but only now she had the chance to ask Alistair about it.

"Oh. I guess I am. I think it's because with Cullen I have you by my side, I can follow your lead, and even if I'm doing something on my own I still feel that you have my back, that you'll fix a clumsy mistake I make, make my words make sense. Is it terribly stupid?" He sounded embarrassed, and
Evelyn didn't want him to feel that way.

"Of course it's not stupid. I understand perfectly. I feel bolder when I am with you. I wasn't able to flirt that shamelessly with Cullen when I was on my own. I think we make a good team."

She crawled over to him and pressed her lips to his.

"That's good then," he whispered against her mouth, before rolling her over on her back and kissing her properly.

Evelyn gasped at the change of position and at the sensation of his tongue delving into her mouth. When the initial shock wore off, she began touching him, her fingers running over his back, marveling at his impossibly defined muscles.

"I think I'm overdressed," Trevelyan announced, using the element of surprise to flip Alistair over, straddling his waist. His eyes followed her every move as she began to slowly unclasp her jacket, and his hands moved leisurely up her thighs. "You can help me," she suggested, and the king went to work on the fastenings of her breeches, still keeping his eyes on her chest.

At first Evelyn wanted to tease her lover, but when her jacket was off, she realized that she would only be delaying her own pleasure, and she has already waited far too long. In one quick motion she took off her breastband. She meant to lean down and kiss Alistair, but apparently he had other plans, since he lifted his head and took one nipple in his mouth, sucking greedily. With a moan, Trevelyan allowed him to pull her down, Alistair laying flat on his back again, with her breasts right over his face.

"The king is a breast man, I see," Evelyn managed to say, delighted with the discovery.

"Definitely," he agreed, letting go of her nipple.

His tongue snuck out to tease the hard peak, before switching to the other nipple. Trevelyan gasped, her hips undulating, sliding, and meeting Alistair's erection. Apparently this was already too much for him, because he let go of her breast, switched their positions again, and started pulling her breeches and smalls down her legs. He was surprisingly quick, and in no time Evelyn found herself naked, the king laying between her spread thighs. She wanted to return the favor, but Alistair was working on his only piece of clothing himself.

"I need you now," Trevelyan told him. It was all happening so quickly, but she couldn't wait. It was almost as if the day spend flirting with Cullen was just a long foreplay and now she was ready for the main event.

Taking her words to heart, Alistair didn't even pull his breeches all the way off, and positioned himself at her entrance. He still waited until Evelyn gave him a quick nod, before pushing into her with a slow but hard thrust. Trevelyan relished the sensation of him filling her, stretching her walls.

"Fuck me," she urged.

"Maker, it's so hot when you say that," he grunted, starting to move.

At first he was slow, thrusting in long, measured strokes.

"Harder," she breathed. "You promised to make me scream."
Alistair needed no more encouragement, as he lifted up her leg, going as deep as possible, pulling almost completely out, before returning with a powerful thrust. The first time he did it, Evelyn mewled, feeling her body rock up the bed. Each time Alistair went harder, pounding into her, and each time Trevelyan’s voice went a bit higher. She reached behind herself, grabbing the headboard to anchor herself in place, as she pushed back as much as she could in that position.

Her leg was beginning to feel stiff, but she didn’t want to tell him to stop, loving the tight grip of his hands on her thigh and hip, and the way he fucked her with wild abandon. His grunts were music to her ears. It felt animalistic, raw, unrestrained.

“So close, so close,” she chanted.

Alistair, who appeared to be as close as she was, quickly placed his hand between her thighs, rubbing that spot at the top of her sex. It was enough and Evelyn felt her back lift up as she started coming, her throat almost aching as she shouted her release.

Through her haze she heard Alistair urgently asking “Can I…?”

“Yes,” she panted, glad that she started taking a contraceptive potion soon after Alistair left.

Not needing further encouragement, Alistair thrust once more, before spilling himself inside her, shuddering in pleasure and gasping out her name.

As soon as he was done, he fell on his back beside her.

“So… that happened,” Alistair said at last, staring dreamily at the ceiling.

“It certainly did.” Evelyn was boneless and exhausted, but she forced herself to move, rolling to her stomach, laying her hands on Alistair’s chest and then resting her chin on them, looking up at him.

“I hope I wasn’t too…” he started

Trevelyan laughed.

“No, you weren’t. I’m not some delicate lady you can break. I enjoy slow lovemaking as much as the next person, but right now I needed it just like that. To feel like you claimed me,” Evelyn reassured.

“I claimed you, did I?” Alistair grinned, his large hands pressing her closer.

“Very thoroughly. And I think I claimed you as well.”

“I feel very claimed. I wouldn’t be more claimed if you tattooed your name on my butt.”

“There’s a thought.” Trevelyan chuckled, amused by the sudden terror on the king’s face. “Don’t worry. I wouldn’t do that. Or would I?” She did her best evil laugh.

“You’re a bad, bad woman.” Alistair swatted her arse playfully, making Evelyn gasp and grin up at him.

"If that's your way of deterring me, then it won't work," she said. "But I shall be merciful."

They laid in silence for a few moments.

“I'm not sure if you know, but I used to be very… naïve. Chantry raised and all," Alistair told her. "Courtly life has taught me a thing or two, yet until this point I was always the one seduced, the
seduc-y, not the seducer.”

“Really?”

Evelyn tried not to think about other lovers in Alistair’s life, or else she would surely grow jealous of them. It was interesting to know that until he met her and Cullen, the king never found anyone worth pursuing.

“Yes. People came to me and I could accept or reject them. I never needed to show any initiative.”

“Do you like the change?” Evelyn asked.

“I think I do, actually. But only because it’s with you.”

“Sweet-talker.” She lifted up her head and pecked him on the lips. “Do you think we should have waited?” she asked, the thought coming to her suddenly. “For Cullen I mean.”

“I haven’t considered it. It’s too late now, but I think it won’t be a problem. I’ll have to leave at some point, even if temporarily, and I wouldn’t want the two of you to not enjoy each other.”

“That’s a good point. If I were to leave and you stayed with him I would like you to still be together. But…” she hesitated. “Oh, never mind.” She buried her head in his chest, feeling silly.

“What is it?” Alistair questioned, touching her face gently, making her look up.

“It’s just that…” She took a deep breath. There needed to be perfect honesty between them for anything to work, but it wasn’t easy. “When you’ll be in Denerim or on the road, those other lovers…”

“There’ll be no one other, just the two of you,” Alistair said. “That is what you want, isn’t it?” he added uncertainly.

“Yes. I just… I care about the two of you, and as strange as it might sound in that context, I don’t want to share you with other people. I want it to be just the three of us. Does this make sense?” Now that she was saying those words she understood how much they didn’t discuss. The goal of seducing Cullen seemed so far away that she didn’t look beyond it, didn’t consider the future of this odd relationship.

“I’d like that too. I don’t know what the future holds, but I want to try. To see where this thing can lead us.”

"It would've been much simpler if you weren't the king and I the Inquisitor, but we have obligations, we're not truly free." Trevelyan felt the mood shifting, a sadness descending on her. It was truly mad. Maybe they should just stop, before things went too far?

"I never wanted to be the king," Alistair told her gently. "I would've been happy to stay a Grey Warden, but things happened, decisions were made, not entirely by me, and here I am. This has changed my life in so many ways, but I'll be damned if that stupid crown is going to ruin my chances of having what I want most."

He squeezed her tightly to his body, and Evelyn clung to him, wanting to let him know she wasn't going anywhere.

"We're what you want most?" she whispered.
"It sound cheesy, but yes. I've never met people like you. There's a connection between the three of
us, I can feel it. It might end in some kind of a disaster, but if it does, it will be because I do or say
something stupid, and not because the world will force us apart. I will fight for you."

His voice was full of determination and passion, and Trevelyan was moved by it. If she were honest
with herself, she would have to admit that there was no turning back, no stopping this thing. She just
needed to hear some kind of reassurance from him, to know that he was as committed as she was.

"I think I'm in love with you," she said. "No. I know I'm in love with you."

As soon as she stopped talking, Alistair kissed her. She felt happy at first, and then confused. He just
talked about their future together, but he didn't say the words back.

"I'm in love with you too," he told her, breaking the kiss and assuaging her fears.

Now she was the one kissing him, trying to mask the tears gathering in her eyes. It was so strange.
She never thought she was the type of person who cried out of happiness, but there she was.

When they parted, they just laid together, looking at each other, basking in the happiness of the
moment.

“That name. For the puppy,” Alistair said suddenly. “I’ve been meaning to ask earlier, but I got…
distracted.” He laughed, running his hand over Evelyn’s back. “It tumbled out a little too easily for it
to be a spur of the moment suggestion. Did you think about it before? Does it have a special
meaning?”

“Before this whole Inquisition business started, back in Ostwick, my cousin was expecting a baby
and I was helping her pick a name. I learned a lot about names and their meanings then. Cullen has
no idea, but I wanted to tell him, to let him know somehow… Amadora means ‘gift of love’,,”
Evelyn explained, biting her lip, hoping it was not too much.

“That’s perfect. My brilliant woman.”

Alistair kissed her again, and Evelyn marveled at how great it sounded to be called his. She was
about to deepen the kiss, when a thought struck her.

"Why would you think that only you could do or say something stupid to ruin our relationship?” she
asked.

It bothered her how often Alistair called himself or something he did stupid. She had to understand
why he did that.

"I have a huuuuuge experience with being stupid," Alistair answered.

"I will not have you talk like this. And if Cullen were here he would back me up," Evelyn declared
fiercely.

"So that's how it's going to be? Alliances, two against one?"

"Yes." Evelyn moved her lips against his ear. "We'd fuck you until you'd agree with us," she
whispered.

"That might work." Alistair grinned at her. "But now you're all by yourself, so you'll have to work
twice as hard."
"It's only fair. But then one day Cullen will have to do my share, and I'll just be watching him convince you."

"You like to think about that, don't you?"

"Oh yes. My favorite thing to think about while talking to the representatives of the Chantry," Trevelyan told him with a smirk.

"How wicked." Alistair feigned shock.

"I think I'll have to be punished," Trevelyan purred. "But that's for another time. Right now I have other plans," she added, straddling him.

Evelyn was quite sure that by the end of the night Alistair was thoroughly convinced that he should never call himself stupid again.

Chapter End Notes

Once more huge thanks to jennybot221, for her excellent help, and especially for making me change the puppy's name. Originally it was supposed to be Hope, and it was so cheesy you guys, with an over the top sappy internal monologue from Cullen. I've spend an inordinate amount of time looking over names and their meanings, and I think Amadora is an improvement over Hope. I still worry that this whole thing is too cheesy. The concept is pretty out there, but I don't want the execution to be too much, too over the top. I hope it's still somewhat enjoyable.

Comments and kudos would be great.
In her rather short tenure as the Inquisitor, Evelyn faced dangerous foes many a time, but she never truly feared death. Not until now. She was surely going to die of boredom. Corypheus could have learned a thing or two about tormenting her from those insufferable nobles.

Skyhold was now under a Free Marcher invasion. Representatives from all of the city-states have descended on her peaceful castle, filling it with empty noise. Trevelyan liked to think of herself as a patriot, but those people were truly testing her love for her homeland.

In all the excitement surrounding her and Alistair's scheming, she forgot about the dreadful gathering. It was supposed to last a week. They were on day four, and she was ready to jump out of the window.

Sneaking away for some quality time with one or both of her favorite Fereldans turned out to be very difficult. All day there was someone trailing behind her, asking questions and demanding she entertain them. It was only at night that she managed to visit Alistair.

Since the whole debacle started, she’s only had one dinner with just Cullen and Alistair. The two of them had to contend themselves with each other's company. Evelyn covered her mouth with her hand as she felt a lascivious smile spreading over her face. She liked the thought of the two of them together - their hard bodies pressed against each other, mouth seeking, hands roaming, hips grinding. Cullen would probably be a bit uncertain, but no less excited, as Alistair would show him what he’s been missing.

Someday soon, she hoped those visions would become reality, but right now the king and Commander were probably doing something entirely platonic. When Alistair was gone, she spent quite some time alone with Cullen, but they mostly played chess, tended the horses, and ate together. Now that Dori was in the picture the two men were most likely playing with her and trying to teach her tricks. Trevelyan saw them once in passing, Cullen running and Alistair encouraging the puppy to chase it's master. There was a metaphor in this, Evelyn was sure.

Of course the nobles were interested in the king and Commander, but since they weren't the hosts, they could more easily decline requests and hide away from the unwanted attention. Evelyn was not so fortunate. She had to be all smiles and undivided attention, even if the haggling over prices of silk brocade was putting her to sleep.

Her head was ever so slightly falling, but she immediately straightened up when she heard the doors bang open.

"Inquisitor!" Cullen strode into the room quickly, his face and voice frighteningly serious.

"What is it?" she asked, already getting up. If Cullen was so worried, whatever was happening had to be rather distressing.

"You must come with me at once. The king has an incredibly important message for you."

The nobles started murmuring, turning to their neighbors with questioning expressions. Trevelyan was equally surprised and worried. What was wrong? Did something happen to Alistair? Was he leaving them again?
"Do you need me as well? Should I call Leliana?" Josephine demanded.

"That won't be necessary. The king doesn't want this to interfere with your meeting. Carry on."

Cullen looked at Trevelyan, and she walked to him, her heart in her throat. Her guests kept whispering, but no-one dared to detain her.

"If you need anything, we're ready to assist," Josephine called after them. Evelyn barely heard her over the pounding of blood in her ears.

"What is it Cullen? What's happened?" she asked desperately, as soon as the doors fell shut behind them.

"I think it will be best if Alistair himself explains," Cullen answered cryptically, walking so quickly she had trouble keeping up.

"Damn it, Cullen, tell me now. Can't you see I'm worried?" she pleaded.

"It’s nothing bad," he assured.

She felt like arguing, asking more questions, but somehow just those three words made her calmer. Cullen would not lie to her. If he said it wasn't bad, then she had no reason to panic.

Now a bit more composed, Trevelyan followed her Commander until they ended up at the doors to Alistair's chambers. Cullen opened them with a dramatic flourish. Evelyn couldn't help laughing when she saw the inside of the room. In the center stood a table laden with cheeses and wine bottles, and just in front of them was a deck of cards.

"You two. You two are impossible," she told them, closing the doors behind herself. Alistair looked very proud of himself, while Cullen appeared a bit uncertain. "You really had me, Cullen," she added.

"He had you, did he?" Alistair grinned, making Trevelyan realize what she said.

"Oh yes, he did." She made sure to make her voice a bit lower, huskier. Cullen blushed. Just the reaction Evelyn was hoping for. "For a moment there I was really scared. Cullen is a far better actor than I could've ever guessed, which is a good thing to know going forward."

Alistair caught her eye and she was sure he understood her meaning.

"I... uh... Alistair told me to be convincing, to really sell it, and then you fell for it, and I just wanted it to be a surprise. I'm sorry if you were very worried," Cullen apologized.

"There's no need for that," Trevelyan assured him. "It was a great idea executed to perfection. Pour me some of that wine and let's play," she told them instead.

Cullen busied himself with filling their glasses, while Alistair shuffled the cards.

"So how do we play?" Evelyn asked.

"Every time you lose you have to take off a piece of clothing or finish your drink, but you can't do the same thing three times in a row," Alistair explained.

Those were excellent rules, she just wondered how Alistair managed to convince Cullen to agree to them. That was something she was going to find out once they were alone.
She wasn't very worried over being naked with the two of them, but she did a quick survey of her
clothing. A lilac skirt with a petticoat underneath, a matching shirt and an undershirt, a pair of
stockings and high heeled shoes, and a corset and smalls made up the entirety of her outfit. Eight
pieces in total was just the right amount. She was especially pleased that she had to look elegant for
the visiting dignitaries, since normally she would wear a pair of breeches and rather boring
underclothes. Now she would be very alluring if she wore only her corset and stockings.

"I hope you'll like it." Cullen offered her a glass. When she was taking it from him she noticed that
he wasn't wearing his traditional armor. His breastplate, gauntlets, gloves and spaulders were missing
from his person. How Alistair managed to achieve that was quite beyond her. The king was a much
more talented negotiator than he let on.

"Thank you," she told her Commander.

"A toast," Alistair said, also taking a glass. "To the three of us and the night ahead. May there be
many more like it."

"To us," Trevelyan echoed.

Cullen looked a bit dazed, but he lifted his glass as well and clinked it with theirs. They sipped the
wine for a moment before settling down at the table.

"I like my wine how I like my men - sweet and strong, so the beverage and the company are both
delightful," Evelyn said with a slow smile, watching Cullen shift in his seat and blush.

"Both can make you walk funny," Alistair added with a smirk.

"And give me a headache," Trevelyan responded.

"Ouch." The king clutched his chest. "That hurt. You wound me, dear lady. How can one so
beautiful be so cruel?"

"With ease." Evelyn grinned deviously at him. "But I do think you will live. Now deal the cards."

"See how she treats me?" Alistair whined, turning to Cullen. "You would never treat me like this,
would you?"

"I would always strive to please my king," Cullen responded smoothly. He looked as surprised as
Trevelyan felt after the words left his mouth. Did he just quite blatantly flirt with Alistair? That
certainly was an encouraging sign.

Alistair seamed at a loss for words, so he just shuffled the deck once more and dealt the cards, a
smile on his face.

The tense atmosphere eased when they started playing and snacking on the cheese.

Evelyn was the first to lose, for which she was grateful.

"My feet have been killing me since the morning." She sighed with relief when she slipped off her
shoes. "Leliana picked those for me, and they certainly are beautiful, but they're also tiny torture
devices."

"Have I ever told you the story of how Leliana wanted to go shopping with Morrigan?" Alistair
asked.
"Never!" Cullen and Trevelyan exclaimed at the same time. They looked at each other and chuckled.

"Do tell," Evelyn prompted.

Alistair obliged them, trying to imitate the voices of the two women, while they played another hand. Cullen and Trevelyan had tears in their eyes from laughter when he was done.

"I shouldn't do two things at once - talking made me lose," Alistair complained, taking off his jacket, which left him in just a thin undershirt.

"I do believe you should talk even more. Wouldn't you agree, Cullen?" Evelyn prompted.

"I'd certainly like to see the king lose," Cullen agreed. "That is, I lost the last time and I don't want to go through that again, and..." He was adorably flustered, cutting himself off by taking a long drink from his glass. Alistair and Trevelyan exchanged glances, very pleased with their progress.

After another lost hand, Alistair promptly took of his undershirt, and both Evelyn and Cullen stared at his naked torso appreciatively. Cullen turned to his drink quickly, red tingeing his cheeks. There was no mistaking the look of desire on his face.

"You two must be pleased," Alistair told them tersely.

"Very much. I just want Cullen to catch up to you."

Cullen didn't say anything, just blushed harder, so Trevelyan didn't press the issue, changing the subject to how much she suffered during the negotiations earlier in the day.

Fate favored her, it appeared, since Cullen lost, and took off his coat. He could have taken a drink, but the fact that he decided to comply with her desires was certainly encouraging. He still had two more layers to go before his chest would be bare, but Evelyn was a patient woman. The reward was going to be well worth it.

Their glasses were already empty, so Alistair went to fetch another bottle, leaving Trevelyan to deal the cards.

"How's Dori doing?" she asked, trying to distract Cullen while she rearranged the cards to her liking.

"She's a clever girl. Every day she learns something new. Just this morning she brought me my gloves." The joy and pride in his voice were truly heartwarming. "I will never be able to thank you two enough for her."

"You'll think of some way of showing us your appreciation." Trevelyan couldn't help herself, enjoying the way Cullen coughed awkwardly.

"I certainly hope so," he managed to say.

When Alistair had their glasses filled, the cards were already dealt. Evelyn tried to pretend to be shocked when she lost. She made a show of slowly loosening the fastenings on her shirt, and finally throwing in carelessly behind herself. She still looked more or less decent, since the lace undershirt was covering most of her body, but Cullen was already stealing glances at her.

Alistair didn't ask her to give him the deck back, so Trevelyan kept dealing, this time forcing Cullen to take of his tunic. According to the rules, since all of them had lost two items of clothing already, they would have to finish their drink if they lost, but Evelyn wanted to push her luck. She lost again, and stood up, working on getting her skirt off. She held her breath, expecting Cullen to remind her of
the rules, but he kept his mouth shut.

"I can't get this knot undone," she complained, after making sure it was properly tangled. "Would you mind helping me?" she asked, looking at Cullen pleadingly.

"I can... uh... try," he offered.

She turned her back to him, and felt his large fingers shake slightly as he pulled at the strings. He sighed with relief when the knot gave way and Trevelyan's skirt sailed down to the floor. Her petticoat was slightly transparent, allowing glimpses of her legs.

"Thank you kindly," she said over her shoulder, gratified to see Cullen staring at her arse. He opened his mouth, probably to apologize, but she just winked at him, and sat down.

All bets were off now, she knew. The rule about drinking was forgotten, and she had to make the all-important decision of who should strip next. Thoughtfully, she nibbled on a piece of cheese and sipped her wine.

"Maybe I should cut the deck now?" her Commander suggested.

"Oh, but I do like doing it," Evelyn protested, wondering if Cullen noticed that she was cheating.

"Just like always, we all take turns." Cullen put his hands on hers and she was helpless not to let go of the cards. His fingers brushed over hers as he took the deck from her, and Trevelyan shivered. Was this an accident or did he know the effect he had on her? She sincerely hoped it was the latter.

Either Cullen was perfectly fair or just like Evelyn, he wanted to strip, since he lost, and pulled his undershirt over his head. Trevelyan had already seen this process before, but it was probably never going to get old. The slow reveal of golden skin and firm muscles was something she could watch over and over. A thought struck her, and she glanced at Alistair, who looked very appreciative, biting at his lip slightly.

"Is it me or is it getting hot in here?" the king muttered.

Trevelyan grinned, looking from one side of the table to the other. Being between two half-naked knights was definitely the place she wanted to be. She imagined them dragging her onto the table, ridding her of the rest of her clothing, and...

"Are you distracted, lady Inquisitor?" Cullen asked, a smirk on his face. He was getting more confident, and it was all but destroying her.

"I'm fine. Deal Commander," she told him, still sounding a bit breathy. She had to get some kind of revenge on him for that teasing. When Cullen was busy with the cards, Evelyn inconspicuously readjusted the corset beneath her undershirt, pulling it a bit lower for maximum effect. If she lost the next hand, Cullen would be in trouble.

Just as she hoped, she got the worst cards, and leisurely, she removed the offending garment, revealing her tightly laced ivory corset. Her breasts were practically spilling from their confines, a hint of her areolas visible over the top.

"Who's distracted now?" Trevelyan demanded after a few moments of weighty silence during which she felt the eyes of both men fixed on her chest.

"I certainly am," Alistair admitted.
Evelyn casually leaned over the table to grab a piece of cheese, and heard Cullen groan quietly.

"My turn to deal," Alistair announced, collecting the cards. "I don't think our Commander could shuffle them in his present state of mind."

"I just... I..." Cullen stammered.

"I do believe it's not the person who loses the most clothing that's the loser in this situation," Trevelyan observed.

"I think in the end we are all winners," Alistair declared, placing the cards in front of them.

"I couldn't have asked for a better evening, I went from bored to tears to deeply entertained," Evelyn told them, surveying her cards. "And what have you two been up to while I was suffering so terribly?"

"We've been planning your valiant rescue, like the knights in shining armor that we are," Alistair explained, as they begun playing.

"Well, now you're knights without any armor, but that's exactly how this damsel in distress likes it."

Out of the corner of her eye Evelyn noticed Cullen shuffling in his seat, moving his chair closer to the table, as if hiding something. She almost sighed at the thought - Cullen sitting right next to her, getting hard looking at her and Alistair, hearing them flirt and tease. How she wished she could reach over, put her hand on his strong thigh, stroke upwards and reach his straining cock. Alistair would certainly enjoy that sight, and maybe he'd join them.

"Are you still there?" Alistair's voice made her snap out of those thoughts.

"You can hardly fault me for daydreaming a bit, considering the circumstances," she answered, playing her hand.

"No, I certainly cannot, since my mind strays a bit as well. How about you, Cullen?"

"I... uh... couldn't fault Evelyn for anything."

"You're sweeter than those Orlesian pastries," she told him with a laugh.

"What an apt metaphor," Alistair complimented, his tongue darting quickly to wet his lips.

Evelyn wanted to kiss him in that moment. He was truly terrific. She didn't think of how it sounded when she likened Cullen to a pastry, but Alistair took it and ran with it, subtle but clear. Cullen's face was a new shade of red. If she were an artist, she'd spend days trying to reproduce all the colors that his skin was capable of turning.

"It looks like I'm the loser once more," Alistair announced.

Unfortunately it was only his boots that were discarded. Cullen breathed a barely perceptible sigh of relief. He couldn't be left in that relative comfort, Trevelyan decided.

"My turn," Evelyn announced, gathering the cards from the table, making sure to give both men a good long look at her breast as she leaned over. That certainly made them tense up a bit.

With practiced ease, Evelyn dealt, stacking the cards so that she was sure to lose. She lied that afternoon when she told Cullen she was bad at cards - she just wanted to convince him to play with them, put him at ease. The truth was that she's had plenty of practice in Ostwick. She left each and
every party she attended with a purse full of coins. Now the stakes were so much higher, and she was glad of her experience.

That hand was the shortest they'd played yet, and Evelyn tried not to look too smug as she stood up from the chair and began untying her petticoat. She sensed the gaze of both men on her and relished their anticipation, feeling beautiful and desired. When the material hit the floor with a soft swish she was rewarded with two groans. Alistair wasn't even trying to hide his reaction, while Cullen coughed, trying to cover it up.

"Do you need more wine? It sounds like your throat is dry," Evelyn told him with manufactured concern, reaching for a new bottle and moving to pour him a glass.

She made sure to brush against Cullen, delighted in the shiver that passed through his body at the contact.

"Thank you," he said, his voice sounding rough.

Evelyn walked around the table, making sure to sway her hips. Her white stockings were opaque, hiding most of her skin, but the part of her upper thigh that was bare certainly looked enticing, especially since her smalls showed a good amount of her backside.

"I think you'll be dealing for the rest of the night. I'm sure neither I nor Cullen have the capacity to perform such complicated tasks after that display," Alistair told her as she poured for him.

Evelyn saw his speech for what it was - the permission to do what she would, steer the night in any direction she thought most beneficial. She certainly appreciated his trust.

Settling back down, she gathered the cards, redistributing them.

"I have three more days of this tedium, but memories from tonight will keep me pleasantly distracted during that time," she said, as they begun again.

"I'm glad we could do something for you," Cullen responded, seeming to have recovered a bit. "You deserve to enjoy yourself."

"I certainly appreciate it. Being entertained by the two of you is what I enjoy most. I'm looking forward to being kept busy by you two for many a day. Or night."

She was laying it a bit thick now, but she needed to know Cullen understood her meaning, without her having to actually come out and say it.

Cullen's face was crimson, the flush creeping down his neck and chest, and he looked like he was concentrating deeply on the cards, as if they held answers to all of life's mysteries.

"Glad to hear that. I'm sure we'll be able to come up with plenty of things to do between the three of us," Alistair said, following her lead, casually playing his card.

Could there be a doubt in Cullen's mind as to their intentions? There was a lump in Trevelyan's throat as she realized that this could be the end. He could start avoiding them, uncomfortable with the whole idea.

"I will admit that Wicked Grace was my plan," Alistair continued. "So maybe next time it will be your turn to think of something, Cullen?"

Evelyn held her breath waiting for the Commander to respond.
"I think I'll be able to find some activity to, uh... amuse us," Cullen said, his voice slightly uncertain.

Sighing with relief, Trevelyan placed the last card on the table. Maybe Cullen wasn't ready yet, but he seemed to understand what they were alluding to, and was slowly getting accustomed to the idea. She honestly couldn't have hoped for more.

"Good." Alistair grinned. "But now it's our dear lady that's going to entertain us."

Just like she wanted, Evelyn lost that hand. With easy grace she pushed her chair away from the table and placed one foot on the flat surface, and ever so slowly started rolling the stocking down her leg. She could swear she almost heard the two men swallow audibly, as the flimsy material was discarded, and she repeated the process with the other leg.

Cullen held his glass so tightly that it was liable to break, while Alistair had his palms firmly pressed to the table, making Evelyn worry that the wood was going to splinter under the pressure. They were both restraining themselves, their control seeming to hang on by a thread. How fun would it be to make it snap, to have them grab her and rip her undergarments from her body, push her against the table and have their way with her.

Evelyn was surprised to realize that she allowed herself to whimper. Alistair looked at her as if he knew what she was thinking about. Cullen on the other hand was drinking deeply from his glass.

Wanting to break the tense moment, Trevelyan moved back to the table and focused once more on the cards. She couldn't lose any more clothing, that was for sure. That would almost certainly demand some kind of action, which she wasn't sure they were all ready for. That left her with the question of which man should lose, and when. It almost made her laugh out loud to think that she was planning this game with the same strategic focus as she did troop movements - contemplating all possible outcomes and weighing the odds.

In the end Cullen discarded his boots, and the three of them were left with two pieces of clothing each. The awareness of the situation seemed to descend on them at the same time. There was awkward shuffling in seats and uncertain glances.

"Does anyone want to back out?" Evelyn asked. Making Cullen uncomfortable, forcing him into something he was reluctant about was not her goal. She wanted him happy and willing.

Alistair remained silent, also waiting for Cullen's reaction. Trevelyan looked at the Commander, whose brows were drawn, as he appeared to be debating something. After a few heartbeats Cullen's face smoothed, and he smiled.

"Are you scared of losing, Evelyn?" he asked, smiling slightly, alleviating her worries.

"I'm very confident," Trevelyan responded, dealing once more.

"And you, Alistair?" Cullen demanded, picking up his cards.

"I'm all in, ready for whatever comes," Alistair reassured, surveying his hand.

They didn't speak, only sipped their wine in concentration as the cards fell in front of them. Evelyn wondered if Alistair knew how she wanted this to play out, and if Cullen suspected that she was the one controlling the game.

"Luck favors us tonight, Cullen," Trevelyan smirked at the Commander when Alistair inevitably lost.

"Is this a good time to say that I'm not wearing any smalls?" Alistair asked in a conversational tone,
making Evelyn's mouth fall open. Her ultimate goal was to make the king lose, but she was hoping to draw it out a bit, make Cullen lose his breeches as well.

Chancing a glance at the Commander, Trevelyan noticed his wide eyes and slightly uneven breathing. Was he surprised, aroused or uncertain, or maybe all three at the same time?

The sound of the chair legs scraping against the floor reverberated around the room as Alistair pushed away from the table. Evelyn held her breath, and then gasped in shock as she heard a knock on the doors.

"Your Highness? Lady Inquisitor?" It was Josephine, interrupting at the worst possible moment.

Cullen was staring daggers at the doors, while Alistair rolled his eyes.

"Yes, Josephine?" Evelyn called back to the Diplomat, trying to make her voice sound even, and not full of annoyance.

"Is everything alright?" Josephine wanted to know.

"Yes. All good. Perfect. Better than good." Trevelyan hoped that would be the end of that, but deep down she knew her luck wasn't going to hold.

"May we come in?" Arl Teagan appeared to be with Josephine.

"No!" Three voices shouted in unison.

They jumped to their feet, ready for a frantic escape to another room. Which would probably be even worse than remaining around the table. If they stayed there, their state of partial nudity would be easily explainable by the game. It would still look bad, but not as downright incriminating as the three of them locked in a room while their clothes were strewn over the floor.

There was a pregnant pause at the other side of the doors.

"The guests are worried. They'd like to know what caused the disturbance. They've been alone for far too long," Josephine explained.

"Fade take all of those..."

"...Maker forsaken..."

"...nosy bastards."

The King, Commander, and Inquisitor exclaimed in turn. They looked at each other, amusement at their perfect synchronization overshadowing their annoyance with the nobles. Without meaning to, Evelyn started laughing. They were standing in their underclothes, cursing the nobles, being scolded by their advisers, and something about it was strangely amusing.

"Shhhhh..." Cullen was unsuccessfully trying to stifle his own laughter. "We shouldn't..." he begun, and burst out laughing again.

Evelyn walked up to him, pressing a palm over his mouth, wanting to help him keep quiet. His muffle sounds made her giggle harder, prompting Alistair to gently clamp a hand over her lips.

"Are you quite done?" Arl Teagan sounded like an annoyed teacher, which Alistair must have found downright hilarious, since he was shaking with laughter. Completing the odd chain, Cullen put a hand over his mouth. They remained like this, trying to contain their mirth, laughing against each-
other's palms.

"We'll be there shortly," Evelyn finally announced, after they composed themselves.

"We'll be waiting in the main hall," Josephine responded, relief in her voice.

"I think we'd have to get away from this arguably lovely castle to get some real, interruption-free time to ourselves," Alistair said with a sigh.

"That's something we might discuss another time. We should get to them quickly," Cullen offered.

That decision made, they busied themselves with grabbing clothes from the floor, and redressing. The men had a much easier time of it than Evelyn. They were already done when she had only finished with her stockings, petticoat and undershirt. She just stepped in the center of her skirt, uncertain where her shirt was, when she heard Alistair tell her to lift up her arms. Without hesitation, she complied, and he pulled the garment over her head. At the same time Cullen took hold of her skirt and dragged it up, tying it quickly. She barely had the time to register how intimate the whole situation was. They were essentially dressing her, and it felt like the most natural thing in the world, as if they've been doing it for years.

"Thank you kindly." She smiled brightly at them, and on impulse got on her toes and kissed Cullen and then Alistair on the cheek.

"No trouble at all," Cullen mumbled, rubbing the back of his neck.

"You two seem to work together very well," Evelyn said, stepping into her shoes, feeling her feet protest.

"It looks that way," Cullen said, wonder and pride in his voice.

"I only wish we could prove our great team work at a task more worthy than putting clothes on a body that should not be covered," Alistair added.

"We'll have to arrange for another test of your cooperation," Trevelyan declared, her lids fluttering as she imagined them working in tandem to undress her, to claim her body, pushing into her, their movements synchronized.

"Do you have a particular task in mind?" Cullen asked, his tone easy, yet his cheeks pink.

"I might have an idea or two," Evelyn responded coyly. "Now are you two ready for this?" She indicated the doors.

"Ten years of dealing with nobles and I don't think I'm ever really ready," Alistair said, nevertheless opening the doors.

The evening was long, but Trevelyan wasn't bored. She was busy thinking up ways of testing Alistair's and Cullen's cooperation skills.

Chapter End Notes

Sooooo... No smut in this chapter. Sorry about it. Be patient with me as I set the stage in future chapters. Just this weekend I've finished a huge smut extravaganza that spans 3
chapters. I wrote my first anal, and I think it turned out pretty well. You can place bets on who goes first, but by the time I wrap this up, I'll go through all possibilities, because I'm both ambitious and perverted.

As always, comments and kudos would be very much appreciated. Also, you can find me on tumblr.
Every morning, after he woke up, Cullen had to spend a few moments disentangling his dreams from his memories. They seemed to blend together more and more with each day. Often the dreams followed up where the memories ended, adding something that did not truly happen. At the same time, reality began to resemble his dreams. He could easily allow them to become one, but should he?

No, he shouldn't. It was wrong. It was sinful. A voice in his head kept reminding him of that, but it was growing more quiet and less stern as time went by. There was less fear in Cullen, and more anticipation.

His dreams have always been rather straightforward. He knew people dreamed of strange objects and situations that symbolized their deepest fears or desires, but his dreams were never hard to decode. When he feared a demon, he dreamt of its seductive face. When he was worried about an upcoming battle, he saw it when he fell asleep. When he longed for Evelyn, his mind conjured up images of her that made him blush to recall.

Despite that, he'd had one dream that was easy to understand, yet still held some symbolism. In it, Cullen was standing over a precipice, about to jump. The fall would be exhilarating, there was no doubt about that, but what would he find when he stopped falling? Could he get up after that? He did not know. Despite those doubts, he felt himself nearing the edge, until his toes were hanging in the air.

Cullen wasn't alone at the precipice. That was a comfort. Evelyn and Alistair were there, standing on each side of him. Their hands tangled with his and their voices whispered in his ear for him to take the plunge, to chance it, feel the rush, and damn the consequences. He trusted them, cared for them - he wanted to do as they wished, knew that they would never let harm come to him.

They didn't push or pull him. They just stood there, waiting for him to make up his mind. They tempted him, told him how incredible the fall would be, how they'd soar through the air, feeling nothing but pure joy, but they didn't force him to do anything. It was his choice.

Cullen woke up before he could find out what he was going to do. He grunted angrily and punched his bed, frustrated by the lack of resolution. He heard a concerned bark from downstairs, where Dori slept on a blanket next to his desk.

“Don’t worry, pup,” he called out to her, regretting that she was no longer small enough that he could take her up to bed.

There were no more sounds, which meant that the perceptive mabari decided to leave him be.

Cullen settled back on the bed, returning to his thoughts. He knew what the dream represented, what that precipice was. It was this thing... this thing between him, Evelyn and Alistair. They wanted him. He could not deny that any longer. They wanted him in their bed. It sounded absurd. Whenever the thought returned to the forefront of his mind, and it did almost constantly, he couldn't quite believe it. But there was proof - proof in their looks, their gestures, their words. They weren't subtle about it anymore.
That game of Wicked Grace was when it became undeniable. There was a promise in their easy banter, in the way they took every chance to touch him. And he responded to it. He’d had a bit too much wine, which made his thoughts less controlled, and his tongue loose. They had flirted with him, there was no other word for it, and he flirted back. That damning voice in his head was silent as Cullen agreed to things not yet specified, as he said yes to a future with more evenings like that one, as he pushed the whole thing further, instead of disillusioning them.

He was only a man, a weak, lustful man, and he hardly knew how he was resisting them thus far. They were, in so many words, offering to make every sordid fantasy he's ever had about them come true. Who would not be tempted when presented with their deepest desires made flesh?

A better man, that's who. He tried to be a better man, each and every day, but this seemed to be beyond him. His resolve to resist, to do what was right, was crumbling with every smile, every light touch, every inch of skin bared to his gaze. They were so beautiful, it was almost unreal. He couldn't tell who captured his attention more.

Those two perfect people, not only physically attractive, but also kind, smart and caring, were interested in him. Why him?, Cullen wondered. They were the king of Ferelden and the Inquisitor - they could've had anyone. People would worship them, jump at the chance to be with them. Why would they pursue him? He was not a charming man, an easy man to be around. With his limited romantic and sexual experience, he probably wasn't well suited for what they wanted.

Questions like that plagued him constantly, but at the same time it was flattering to be wanted in that way, to be courted. That word made him laugh. How absurd it all was. Two people were ostensibly courting him, together. There were meals, entertainment, gifts - just like during an ordinary courtship. They've put so much effort into it, were so patient with him.

That made more questions arise in his mind. Would they really expend so much effort to just have him for a night? And since that seemed illogical - how long did they want to keep up this strange entanglement? He had no way of knowing.

Furthermore - what was their relationship? Were Alistair and Evelyn lovers? There was an ease in the way they acted around each other, a sort of intimacy that could easily be explained by them being together. Would they marry eventually? Would he be a guest at their wedding, remembering the nights he spent with them? That thought filled him with jealousy he had no right to feel. That was what should happen. Evelyn should become Alistair's queen. They were well suited, they obviously cared for one another - it was a perfect match both politically and personally.

So why add him to the mix? It was depraved. They were... Maker, he couldn't bring himself to think badly of them. But how could he not? They wanted the same things he did, and he berated himself for that. Why would he not think of them the same way he thought of himself?

Another important question was how did it happen? Did they discuss it? They had to. He wondered how such a conversation would sound. He could never imagine himself admitting to someone that he desired another man (he could hardly admit it to himself), and Alistair was apparently brave enough to voice that.

This thought brought another wave of images - Alistair with other men, Alistair taking a man, Alistair accepting another man into his body, Alistair on his knees, that smile of his stretched around... Cullen tried to stop those lurid thoughts, stop the way his body responded to them, but it was all in vain. He couldn’t help himself - he thought of Alistair sharing those desires with Evelyn, Evelyn responding with arousal, both of them thinking of Cullen, wanting him with them.

Maker, that was not helping. Cullen got out of bed quickly, busying himself with dressing, trying to
leave the thoughts behind, in his bed.

He almost missed the days when he thought he was the only one who was perverted, when he believed that they could never want him the way he wanted them. It was safe. There was no choice for him to make, no sin to commit, other than the one in his mind. Then it was out of his hands, far away, unattainable, and now he knew that with a crook of his finger he could have them. He had this power over them, and it was thrilling, when it wasn't terrifying.

All that worry and stress descended on him only when he was alone. With them he felt secure, they calmed him, made him... happy. It felt so strange to name the emotion. He never thought he could be truly happy, but in those stolen hours, when they were hiding from responsibilities, laughing, drinking, joking, and flirting, he was happy. He was not ready to let go of that.

Could he salvage that? Keep the friendship, while firmly rejecting any improper parts of their relationship? At least to that question he thought he knew the answer, and it was a 'yes'. He could put a stop to the inappropriate jokes and overly familiar touches if he wished. They gave him plenty of opportunities, never pushing too far, always making sure he was comfortable. He could ensure that they knew he was not interested in pursuing this thing further. They were not petty enough to reject his friendship because he did not wish to have a sexual relationship with them. He had faith in them.

That left the question of whether he was going to do that. Did he want to remain just friends? It was the right choice, but the idea filled him with disappointment. He would probably regret embarking on a journey like that, but it was equally likely that he would regret never taking a chance.

This confusion was making his head ache. He had no time for that. There was work to be done.

Determined to be productive, Cullen went down to his office, petted Dori, and then walked to the main hall to get some breakfast.

He was spooning some porridge into his mouth, trying to make a mental list of things to, when Evelyn sat next to him.

"I have some bad news," she said without preamble, her voice strained.

Cullen felt his throat tightening in worry. Carefully, he placed the spoon in the bowl and turned to look more fully at Evelyn. Her brows were creased, a thin line of worry between them. He saw her like this many a time, and always longed to wipe away that concern, to hold her in his arms until everything was right.

"What is it?" he asked, trying to sound calm.

"It's Alistair," Evelyn said, making Cullen's breath hitch. "He'll be leaving us soon." She bit her lip and shook her head slightly, as if dislodging some thought. "He's been here for... I can't even count. A long time. Too long, if Arl Eamon is to be believed. Alistair is with him now. They're shouting. He's fighting to stay with us, but we all know a king does not truly belong to himself, or to people other than his subjects. He'll have to return to Denerim soon."

Cullen wasn't sure what pained him more - the thought of Alistair leaving, of not seeing him each day, or the way it was effecting Evelyn, how small and sad she looked while telling him this.

"How long do we have?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. Days? Two weeks at most, if I understood the screaming correctly."

That was not enough time. That was too soon. How could he make up his mind in that time? Was it
a sign to give up on this thing? Or maybe it was the opportunity to finally push forward?

"We have to do something," Cullen declared.

"We can't keep him here, no matter how I wish we could."

"I know, I know. It was not what I meant. We just have to do something special before his departure. Treat him to something he won't soon forget." Evelyn looked him square in the face, and there was a mischievous twinkle in her eye. Cullen swallowed audibly. It wasn't what he meant. Or maybe it was? "The dragon!" he exclaimed, his mind for once coming to his rescue. "The one in the Emerald Graves. You still haven't killed it. I know Alistair killed a high dragon while travelling with the Hero of Ferelden, but he didn't have a chance to do it again since. I'm sure he'd love another opportunity."

This was all in all a good plan, Cullen decided. There was nothing quite like killing a dragon. The fear and exhilaration, the pain and the overwhelming feeling of triumph. He didn't understand why Bull was so obsessed with them, until Evelyn asked him to accompany her to kill one in Emprise du Lion. Corypheus was defeated, and Evelyn insisted that Cullen had to get away from his office and experience that. At first he was slightly skeptical, but when the fight was over, when Evelyn jumped on his back, her arms winding around his neck and her thighs twisting about his waist, allowing him to carry her around, both of them roaring with pure joy, he knew it was one of the most incredible moments in his life. They went on to kill the other two dragons in that region, and Cullen was itching for another fight. To share that with Alistair and Evelyn would be incredible.

"That's actually a great idea." Evelyn smiled at him broadly. "He'd love that. I think we should keep it a secret, and start preparations right away. I'll go talk to Dorian, ask him if he'd accompany us. Oh, and Josie - she's sure to help us find a noble who owes us a favor and will give us the run of his or her summer palace. Could you get to work on gathering all the supplies we need and selecting the right soldiers to accompany us?"

"Absolutely."

"You're brilliant, you know that?" Evelyn asked, her smile even wider than before.

"If you say so," Cullen answered, feelings his cheeks heat up at her praise.

"Don't be modest," she told him. "But at least you don't call yourself stupid," she added after a moment, a frown on her face.

"And who does?"

"Alistair."

"What?!" Cullen's voice might have risen a bit too much. He was just shocked that Alistair would say such a thing about himself.

"I convinced him to stop. I told him you'd be on my side, and obviously I was right. If he ever has any doubts, you'll be the one to convince him, though." She giggled as if at a private joke. Cullen looked at her in confusion. "I'll explain it to you one day. One day soon I hope. For now it's off to work with us." Quickly, she embraced him, and then she was gone.

Cullen stared at his porridge for a long time. That was it. The precipice. Run away or jump. The dragon idea was good regardless of what he was going to do, so he decided to focus on that, but he knew that he couldn't put off the decision forever. Things were coming to a head.
How strange it was - Evelyn had gone from deeply disappointed to excited in a matter of minutes. That was the effect Cullen had on her. He made her feel better no matter how bad things got, and came up with solutions to her problems. The plan with the dragon hunt was truly excellent. She could just imagine Alistair's face when he saw the colorful Greater Minstral. What a way to send him off, what a memory to give him.

Of course there were other memories he could be carrying back to his empty bed in Denerim, but that was entirely depended on Cullen. If he wasn't ready to take that step, then it was alright. She'd be lying if she said that the waiting wasn't frustrating, but she didn't wish to force him into something he wasn't entirely certain about. Maybe Alistair's departure would do them some good. Absence was supposed to make the heart grow fonder, so when Alistair eventually returned, Cullen would be overjoyed to see him, and ready to move their strange relationship to the next level.

For now she had to start planning the excursion to the Emerald Graves. Knocking tentatively on the doors to Dorian and Bull's room, she waited for a response. No matter in how much of a hurry she was, she would never make the mistake of walking in without being invited. Once she was eager to tell Dorian that some old tomes he wished to study have just arrived, and barged into the room, getting to see much more of Bull then she ever wished to. After she closed her eyes, apologized profusely, and run away, she came to the conclusion that it could've been worse. At least she didn't see them actually doing anything.

"Come in," Dorian called out after a moment.

Evelyn pushed the doors open and smiled at her friend, sprawled on the sofa, a book in his lap.

"The library is insufferably loud. I just can't stand it," he complained, motioning for her to sit.

"The whole castle is very noisy. How about going somewhere where it's nice and quiet, with only the occasional dragon roars?" Evelyn suggested, dropping down into an armchair and tucking her legs under herself.

"Again? Well, at least Bull will be happy. Please tell me this one doesn't breathe fire. I do like my eyebrows the way they are, and have no desire to be forced to draw them on."

Evelyn chuckled, thinking about the time she took Solas to kill the Sandy Howler and the elf returned with half of his eyebrows singed off.

"This one breaths ice, so you're safe on that account. But I'm afraid I'll have to disappoint your dear amatus. We only need a mage to complete our party," Evelyn explained, genuinely regretting the fact that she was going to have to see Bull's face fall after hearing that he wasn't going to hunt a dragon with her and his lover.

"Who are you taking then?"

"Cullen and Alistair. It was actually Cullen's idea. Alistair will be leaving us soon, and our Commander thought that it would be a nice surprise for the king."

Dorian opened his mouth, then closed it, and finally sighed dramatically.

"I wasn't going to ask, because you didn't seem willing to talk about it, but now I just have to know. What's going on between you three? You played it down, but I know you had feelings for Cullen, and the big idiot felt the same. I thought that if you kept at it, you'd win him over. Then the king arrived and it looked like the two of you were getting close. And now you're the inseparable golden trio. Which one are you actually interested in pursuing?"
Evelyn swallowed audibly, feeling warmth creeping up her neck. Dorian was one of her closest friends, and she trusted him implicitly, but she was too embarrassed about her feelings for Cullen to talk about that. She wasn't too shocked that he figured them out, but the revelation that her attachment to Alistair was also apparent wasn't a pleasant one. And how to explain what was actually going on? Should she lie?

No. Looking at Dorian's earnest, slightly concerned face, she knew she wouldn't lie to him. Maybe it would be good to have another person's perspective on the whole insanity?

"If I tell you, do you promise not to judge me?" she asked, her voice barely above a whisper.

"I'm a son of a Tevinter Magister who's in a relationship with a Qunari Tal-Vashoth. A male Qunari Tal-Vashoth. How much more scandalous can you get? Am I in a position to judge anyone? And barring that, why would I want to judge my friend?"

"I know, I know... It's just... Maker, I actually think this is more scandalous than your relationship. It was unfair of me to suggest that you would judge me, but this... This is weird... And..." She was rambling incoherently, feeling her palms sweat. What if Dorian told her how crazy it was? What if he told her to break it off for her own good? What if she was making a mistake?

"Evelyn, look at me." Dorian got up from his careless pose on the couch and sat close to her. He waited until she caught his eye before continuing. "Whatever it is, it's going to be alright. I'll stand by you no matter what. I'll help you however I can."

Evelyn nodded, and took a deep breath.

"I and Alistair... We're... We're-trying-to-get-Cullen-to-join-us," she said in a rush, the words tumbling out together.

Dorian's face was very still for a moment, before he grinned broadly.

"I was not expecting this. I'm not sure what I was expecting, but it wasn't this," he said.

"What does that mean? Do you think I'm a completely depraved wanton harlot?" Evelyn hid her face in her hands, mortified by her confession. It was so frightening to be talking about it with someone other than Alistair.

"Two strapping knights - who wouldn't be tempted? I'm commanding your taste."

Evelyn peeked from between her fingers. Dorian looked like he was sincere.

"So you don't think we're perverted and horrid?"

"Not at all. But I do have some more questions, if you'll allow."

Completely uncovering her face, Evelyn nodded for him to proceed.

"You and Alistair are already in a relationship?"

They haven't actually discussed it, not in so many words, she realized.

"We're in love," she said.

"And Cullen - whose idea was it?"

"I actually caught Alistair staring at Cullen, and that brought us together."
"So the king enjoys the company of men as well as women? Maybe I should tell Bull about it," Dorian teased.

"Hey! One threesome per monarch - that's the limit."

"You won't share him with us, but you will with Cullen? That seems unfair."

Evelyn rolled her eyes. They were joking, and it was easy. There was no judgment, Dorian wasn't trying to talk her out of it. It couldn't have gone better.

"Is this a one time thing or..." Dorian trailed off.

"If we wanted it to be over just like that we should've chosen an easier person." Evelyn chuckled bitterly. "No. It might be insane, but we want it to be an ongoing arrangement. We both care about him. Screw it, I'm going to say it - I've been in love with him almost since the moment we've met. I tried to deny it, but it's the truth. And I think Alistair feels the same way."

Dorian fell silent, contemplative.

"I know. It's crazy. It doesn't have a real future. It won't work. It's not normal. It's not how things are done. Alistair's the king, and kings need queens, not strange relationships with two people at the same time. I know all of this, but I can't let go of the idea once it's been planted in my mind. I might be brokenhearted when it's over, but I just can't help myself."

"They make you happy, don't they?"

"Yes. More than anything ever could before," Evelyn admitted.

"Then you owe it to yourself to see it through. You don't know what will happen in the future. Take the good with the bad and live your life without fear," Dorian told her, his voice solemn.

"You really think so?" Evelyn felt hope blossoming in her chest at his words.

"Yes. You get precious little happiness with all the pressure put on you. The same goes for Cullen, and I expect Alistair as well. Be happy, live without regrets."

"Thank you, Dorian. This means a lot to me. I've never wanted anything this much in my entire life, but still I have moments of doubt from time to time," Evelyn admitted.

"Always glad to push people into sin," the mage said with a smirk. "Now that we've established that you're going ahead with it, I need more details. To be quite honest I didn't think Cullen had any interest in men, but you must be confident that he has."

"He always stares at Alistair as ardently as Alistair stares at him. He treats the king the same way he treats me, reacts the same way to his flirting. If you'd seen him during our strip Wicked Grace..."

"You played strip Wicked Grace? Cullen swore off cards after the last time."

"Well, Alistair convinced him to reconsider. He told me that it didn't take much. It was supposed to be a surprise for me, but at first Cullen insisted that they could do something different. Then Alistair put his hands on Cullen's shoulders, looked him in the eye, and said that it would mean the world to him if Cullen agreed. At that point Cullen stared at his lips for a long while, and said yes. Alistair told me that it took everything he had in him not to kiss Cullen."

"It does sound like the Commander has it bad for the king. Now tell me all other juicy details of what
"you crazy perverts have been getting up to," Dorian prompted.

"It's before noon, but I think I need some whine for this conversation," Evelyn declared.

She wasn't sure how long she's been talking. Wine flowed freely as she recapped all of her and Alistair's efforts, and Cullen's reactions. Dorian was a very attentive listener, nodding and making small observations from time to time.

"So after the dragon hunt Alistair will be gone?" Dorian asked when she was done.

"Yes."

"And you don't know when he'll be back?"

"No."

"You better close the deal before then."

"But what if Cullen isn't ready?" Evelyn despaired.

"Believe me, he's as ready as he could be. He knows your intentions, and now he has to stop acting like a scared child and do something about it."

"We can't be too aggressive. We can't just, I don't know, wait in his room naked."

Evelyn slumped back in the chair, daunted by the prospect of the time constraint.

"This attitude won't help. You just have to set the right mood and things will happen naturally. Good meal, low light, a few suggestive words, an invitation to move the proceedings to your bedroom, and he'll be done for."

"Easier said than done," Evelyn muttered sullenly. She was truly frightened that it was moving too fast for Cullen. But on the other hand, if nothing happened before Alistair's departure, then they could lose all the progress they've made thus far, and Cullen would revert to his uncertain, timid self.

"I'll do everything in my power to make this a success. I'll help you organize everything, and once everything is set up, I'll vanish. It will be just the three of you in a fine Orlesian summer palace. You're getting one of those, aren't you?"

"I was hoping Josie would help me arrange that."

"Then what are you waiting for? You don't have much time. Go!" Dorian made shooing motions with his hands.

Evelyn scrambled to her feet, feeling the wine hit her head. She swayed a tiny bit, then righted herself and laughed.

"This is insane."

"You've used that word a few times already."

"Just... Thank you for putting up with all of that, for wanting to help. You're the best, Dorian."

Bending down, Evelyn hugged her friend tightly.

"Well, once you help your friend seal a hole in the sky and defeat an ancient Tevinter Magister,
assisting in her preparations for a threesome isn't such a weird thing," the mage replied, after he let go of Evelyn. "Now go, make arrangements."

Evelyn nodded, and was nearly to the doors when Dorian stopped her.

"Can I tell Bull about the whole thing?" he asked

"Maybe wait until I succeed. I don't want to jinx it," Evelyn told him. "I can just see how he'll react."

"'Good on you, boss. I'm so proud'," Dorian said, imitating his lover's voice and sounding a bit ridiculous.

"What's it about now?" Bull's real voice came through the doors.

Evelyn and Dorian exchanged a quick glance before laughing.

The doors fell open, and Bull strode inside, looking from Dorian to Evelyn.

"What's going on?" the mercenary questioned.

"Nothing right now, but I'll tell you soon," Dorian responded.

"Some secrets? You know I'm good at getting those out." Bull grinned.

"You'll find out soon enough. Don't be impatient," Evelyn told him.

"If you say so, Boss."

"Just... keep your fingers crossed. I need all the help I can get, and especially your good wishes would be useful."

"Especially mine?"

"Everything will be revealed in due time. Hopefully."

Bull looked a bit confused, but Evelyn didn't want to explain further.

"I'll be on my way," she said.

"My fingers will be crossed, boss," Bull called after her, making her smile.

There was much to be done. Evelyn had plenty of preparations to go through, and all without letting Alistair know what was happening. The wine made her giddy, and the talk with Dorian gave her an extra dose of optimism. She could do it. In less than a fortnight she was going to have all that she wanted.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter is full of talking, without any action. I'm sorry about that, but I really need to set up the big smut scene. Stick it out with me a while longer, will ya?

I should not explain my own jokes, but I'm not sure if it will be obvious on the first go around, so here it goes - the last words from Cullen's point of view are both a pun and
pornshadowing.

Next chapter is from Alistair's point of view. Here's hoping I'm doing him justice.

Comments and kudos would be wonderful.
The past week has been hectic. Alistair had at least two screaming matches with Arl Teagan per day. It was their new record. They usually got along well, with Alistair only whining when his adviser told him about some new tedious duty he had to perform. He was the king, he knew what that entailed, and was mostly resigned to it. He could deal with stuck up nobles, squabbling merchants and sneaky foreign ambassadors. What he couldn't deal with was being separated from the people he’s grown to care for so much.

It was so very unexpected, what happened to him in Skyhold. Before departing he was sure that he was going to be bored to tears, just like any other time he was forced to visit someplace, but his prediction turned out to be so very wrong. Evelyn and Cullen were the best thing that happened to him since... since he couldn't even remember. What were the odds that he would meet two such amazing people at the same time?

Arl Teagan was baffled that Alistair kept putting off the date of his departure, and Alistair couldn't very well explain the reason. 'I've fallen in love with two people and don't want to ever leave them,' wasn't something the arl would understand or condone.

Frankly, Alistair didn't understand it very much either. How could he have such strong feelings for two people at the same time? It was quite beyond him. He gave up on trying to figure it out and concluded that he was due some happiness after, well, everything else. His childhood was not exactly the stuff of story books, and he hated templar training. It seemed odd how being one of the two last Grey Wardens in Ferelden and fighting a blight was a high point of his life thus far. It was frightening and dangerous, but it was an adventure. He had duties to perform, but in a way he was free then.

And then Fergus Cousland had to go and make him a king. Alistair allowed his friend to convince him that it was the correct thing to do, that it was his right and his obligation, that only he could lead the nation. Maybe it would've been better if Fergus became the king by marrying Anora. Alistair knew it was a possibility, but Cousland was too in love with that which Morrigan to even contemplate it. That was a mystery to Alistair. His friend was a fundamentally good man, but he fell head over heels for the sarcastic apostate. Maybe that explained something. Maybe the nature of love was insanity, and questioning it was pointless.

What mattered was that being a king was not something Alistair was ever prepared to do. It didn't exactly agree with him. He'd take a sword and shield and fight monsters any day instead of sitting on a throne reading papers. He allowed himself some indulgences in the form of cheese platters and wine, hunting, and taking lovers. The Chantry raised virgin was long gone. If he were stuck in Denerim, he was going to do everything he could to kill the boredom and tedium.

He remembered his Templar days, the confusion at the strange feelings other recruits, both male and female, caused him. The Chantry preached that it was wrong, but the Chantry preached a lot of things that made little sense. And yet he couldn't help feeling wrong back then. In Denerim things became less muddled. There were men who sought his company, acting as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and Alistair stopped struggling with his desires. Pleasure was pleasure, and who delivered it mattered little.

Meeting Cullen and learning of the way they almost crossed paths made him think about what
would've happened had they actually trained together. Alistair couldn't imagine not noticing Cullen. Would they have been friends? Would they have been more? Had Cullen been there, it would not have been so easy to leave the Order, so maybe it was good that they met so many years later.

The only regret Alistair had was that Fergus didn't take him to the tower. His friend argued that Alistair knew some of the people there, and it might've been hard for him to make objective decisions. At that time Alistair agreed with him. Now he couldn't help thinking about Cullen, stuck there with the abominations, tortured.

The way Cullen spoke of that time made Alistair's heart ache. That confession took a lot out of the Commander. Alistair was sure it was not something Cullen told many people, but he trusted him with that part of his past. It was humbling to be let into his confidence. It was the confirmation of what Alistair suspected almost from the moment they've met - there was a connection between them, an understanding.

Alistair wished he could've been there for Cullen all those years earlier, but the past was done. He would never reclaim it. All he could do was try and support Cullen in any way he could now, and give him some new, good memories.

That proved to be a bit challenging. Cullen was conflicted. That was plain to see. Alistair wasn't sure if it was the fact that Alistair was a man that made him hesitate, or if it was the same feeling of unworthiness that earlier prevented him from pursuing Evelyn. Of course it could've been the fact that Alistair and Evelyn were seducing him together. It was very unconventional, that was undeniable, but in those strange times nothing was truly ordinary.

He would never give up, but their remaining time together was trickling away, making Alistair feel uneasy. Of course he would return and try and try again, but he was worried about what effect the separation would have on Cullen.

Evelyn wasn't concerned, and that made him feel better. She had a plan, he knew it, and when she had a plan nothing would stand in her way. She was a formidable woman, and Alistair was shocked Cullen didn't fall at her feet the moment she smiled at him. Alistair was hopelessly in love with her and he would never be able to resist her.

Alistair's never had more fun than when he was planning and scheming with her, and then executing those designs. And at night when they ended up in his bed it was like nothing he's ever felt before. The fact that he truly cared for her made all the difference. He always had some warm feelings for his lovers, would never be able to be with someone he did not at least like, but it never reached this level. Through all his dalliances, he's never been in love, and now it appeared that he was making up for lost time, developing deep feelings for two people at once.

Two people who were at that very moment riding just ahead of him, talking in low voices, laughing, and occasionally glancing back at him. They had a plan for him, a surprise, they said, and he went along with it. Why they had to go all the way to Orlais for it, was anyone's guess, but he trusted them, and so there he was, on a twisting and turning path between high grassy hills. Everything was so very green and bright here, in the Emerald Graves. The light shining through the thick canopy of tree branches was making everything seem to sparkle. But nothing was as captivating as Evelyn and Cullen.

Alistair wasn't sure what they were going to be doing during the days, but they would have to stay somewhere for the night, and he couldn't help hoping that his big surprise was going to be the Commander and Inquisitor, waiting for him in a darkened room, on a bed. He shouldn't get his hopes up too much, but the image of those two people beckoning for him to join them was just irresistible.
"Huh?" he muttered, after feeling a slight poke at his side.

"Not on guard in Orlais? What kind of Fereldan are you anyway?" Dorian asked, smirking, and sheathing his staff.

"Sorry, I just got a bit... distracted," Alistair muttered, embarrassed that the mage coughed him daydreaming.

"I bet." Dorian was grinning in an entirely disconcerting manner. "Could you please call Evelyn and tell her that you need to discuss something with her?"

Alistair frowned.

"Why?"

"I need to talk to Cullen. Alone. But don't get jealous," Dorian told him calmly.

"Why would I be jealous?" Alistair asked, feeling his stupid traitorous cheeks turning red. Did the mage know something? Was Alistair so very obvious?

Dorian rolled his eyes and sighed, causing Alistair to laugh. The mage was a breath of fresh air - he acted normally around the king, joked, made subtle jabs, and didn't hold his tongue. Alistair appreciated being treated that way.

"Just call her over. She'll explain everything," Dorian persisted.

"Fiiiine. Evelyn!"

She turned her head to look at him.

"Yes?"

"Could you come here a moment? I need to talk to you about something."

"Is everything alright?" Cullen asked, probably noticing how weird Alistair sounded. Maker bless that man, always worrying about everything.

"Fine. Fine. Everything's fine. We just need to talk about... stuff... you know... things." That was very smooth and non-suspicious.

"Don't worry your pretty head, Commander, I'll keep you company," Dorian offered, already moving forward, just as Evelyn turned back to ride along Alistair.

"So what is this about?" he asked once they were side by side.

"Dorian's advocating on our behalf," Evelyn told him.

"WHAT?!"

Cullen and Dorian turned and looked at him with puzzled expressions on their faces.

"Yes! He does hate cheese. Weird little man," Evelyn supplied.

Cullen laughed, while Dorian shook his head, as they turned back and started talking.

"Thanks for that," Alistair muttered, feeling foolish about his reaction. "But how does he..."
advocate?"

"Don't worry. He won't come out and say 'You better fuck those two - they have it bad for you'." Evelyn chuckled, while Alistair cringed a bit. "He'll just soften him up a bit with vague words about taking chances and seizing happiness."

Alistair just nodded.

"I hope you don't mind the fact that I told him. I needed him for your surprise, and then it just kind of slipped out," Evelyn admitted.

"Mind? We need all the help we can get."

They both laughed.

Maybe he should be uncomfortable with someone knowing about the situation, but he didn't peg Dorian for a person who would judge or go around spilling secrets. He liked the mage, and if Evelyn trusted him, then that was good enough for him. And if he did help, then Alistair was ready to grant him some minor noble title.

They rode in silence for a while before Alistair asked "So the surprise doesn't include Cullen delivered to our bed?"

"Our bed? I like calling things ours." Evelyn's smile was radiant, and Alistair wondered what he did to have her in his life. Maybe helping stop the Blight was finally paying off. "The surprise is not sex-related, but I'm not crossing that possibility off."

"No?" Alistair felt himself grinning.

"Again. No promises. But if Cullen fails to cooperate, then I'll have to work twice as hard to give you a good sendoff." She winked at him. "What do you think Dorian is telling him?" she asked, as they both observed the mage making a broad gesture.

"I know he's pretty awkward, but he's got a nice butt?," Alistair offered.

"It's probably more like 'She makes really lame jokes, but even I can see her tits are excellent.'"

"The way they stare at you makes me want to gag - put us all out of our misery and tell them you love them."

"They're both weirdos, but they'll blow you like there's no tomorrow."

They stopped, staring as Cullen tilted his head and nodded.

"That looked like a compelling argument," Evelyn observed.

"I think it was 'You'll be able to have sex on the throne in the palace in Denerim'."

"Will we?" Alistair looked at Evelyn who was practically bouncing in the saddle. "I've never been there, but now that you've mentioned it, I want to do that very badly." As he looked at her, a smirk appeared on her face. "Wait. This tumbled out a little bit too quickly. Is this a fantasy of yours?"

"It might kind of be?" Alistair answered in a hushed tone. Ruling wasn't all it was cracked up to be, and sometimes he would find himself muttering 'Fuck it all. Fuck the palace, fuck the crown, fuck the throne'. Once he thought about fucking and the throne, the image wouldn't leave him. He's never mentioned it to any of his lovers, because somehow it felt like it would be crossing some kind of
boundary of propriety, but with Evelyn and Cullen he could see himself going for it.

"That gives me some ideas," Evelyn said. "A brave warrior is richly rewarded for his valiant deeds by his king and a noble lady. A serving girl and a knight are caught by the king while doing some very inappropriate things on his throne, and they're punished for the transgression. Or perhaps a visiting dignitary stumbles upon the king and his lover and she's scandalized and titillated, and demands to be allowed to join in. The possibilities are endless!"

"And that's off the top of your head?" He chuckled. Evelyn's enthusiasm and creativity surpassing his own was beyond anything he could hope for.

"Your idea was truly inspiring. Also, I have a throne of my own - there's some potential there."

He was ready to say something about that, but they rode around the bend in the road, and a huge Orlesian mansion came into view. Whatever else could be said about those people, they sure did know how to build summer homes. This one stretched behind a tall fence, the traditional lions protecting the ornate gate, trees with colorful blooming flowers surrounding the two level structure.

A servant was already opening the gate, and they passed into the estate, making for the stables, where they dismounted.

"The bags will soon be in our rooms, and we'll be able to prepare for the forthcoming events," Dorian told them, fluidly falling into the role of the host.

"Can’t you tell me what it is already?" Alistair complained, his curiosity getting the better of him.

"Then it wouldn't be a surprise," Cullen and Evelyn exclaimed at the same time. They glanced at each other and laughed. Alistair felt his gaze softening as he looked at them. Tearing his eyes away from them, Alistair turned to Dorian who mouthed 'You're lucky' to him. Alistair could only nod.

"Josie told me all about this place. I've already picked out the rooms for you. Follow me," Dorian instructed.

Alistair raised a brow, looking at Evelyn, who just grabbed him and Cullen under the arm and started walking, forcing them to move with her. Alistair looked over her head at Cullen, who just smiled and shrugged. Just like him, Cullen would probably allow Evelyn to lead them to the Fade itself.

From the stables they walked into the building proper. It was the traditional Orlesian affair – sumptuous, verging on gaudy, all in white, blue and gold, with large windows, rich curtains and plush furniture. Dorian led them upstairs, over the marble steps, and down a corridor full of paintings of masked people, who looked like they were judging them. Alistair wondered idly how many secret rendezvous were conducted in the rooms hidden behind the gilded doors. He suspected that three people would not be a record number, but somehow he doubted that any others felt the kind of love they did.

“Here we have the king’s room, and at the end of the corridor, the Commanders. Evelyn, yours is between the two of them,” Dorian informed, after stopping and turning to look at them. The small smile on his face told Alistair that he chose the words very precisely, and enjoyed the little joke that flew over Cullen’s head, but was perfectly understandable to Alistair and Evelyn.

“That’s exactly where I want to be,” Evelyn responded, making it a bit more obvious. Alistair felt himself redden, and glanced at Cullen, who shifter slightly.

“I suspect your luggage is already inside. I’d suggest a nap before lunch, and then we will set off. You’ll need your strength, Alistair,” the mage said.
They hadn’t been riding for a very long time and Alistair didn’t feel tired. But he would heed the advice, even if he wasn’t sure Dorian meant his surprise or the activities that were hopefully going to be taking place that night.

Evelyn disentangled her arms from theirs, and smiled at Dorian.

“Thank you for arranging everything,” she said.

“My pleasure.” The mage laughed lightly. “And yours and yours and yours,” he added nodding to the three of them. “A servant will be by to wake you up when it’s time,” he finished before walking away.

“I will see you soon,” Evelyn told them, heading to her room.

Cullen walked down the corridor without a word, looking like he was lost in a world of his own. Alistair hoped that Dorian gave him something to think about, and that Cullen was making his final decision. There was no point in contemplating it now. It was all going to be resolved soon enough.

Without another thought, Alistair opened the doors to his room. He didn’t pay his surroundings much mind. The room was large and luxurious, just like all the other’s he’s stayed in since he became king. All the precious metals, rare wood, expensive materials, and over the top decorations were starting to blend together.

Taking off his boots and riding jacket, he threw himself into bed, the soft mattress giving way under his weight. For a moment he was afraid the excitement would not allow him to fall asleep, but the soft covers and the warmth from the sun shining through the high window pulled him under quickly.

A knock on the doors roused Alistair from his slumber.

“Hngh,” he muttered incoherently.

“Would you like me to take you into the dining room, Your Highness?” the servant called from outside.

“In a mnmt,” Alistair answered.

Slowly he dragged himself up, and redressed. He looked disheveled, but he couldn’t care very much. He follow the servant down, into a large airy room overlooking an inner garden with a small pool. Cullen, Evelyn, and Dorian were already waiting for him, seated behind a long table laden with food. With satisfaction Alistair noticed that this were not the weird tiny Orlesian dishes, which could never fill a person’s stomach, but hearty Ferelden ones.

“I am really sacrificing myself for you,” Dorian told him, a playful note of chastisement in his voice, as he poked a thick slice of meat with his fork.

“You truly are the most noble of men,” Alistair said with a smile, settling himself in an empty chair, reaching for the potatoes.

They started eating, Evelyn and Dorian picking their food carefully and exchanging glances that spoke of their suffering, while Alistair and Cullen stuffed their faces happily. The conversation was sparse as they ate. Alistair’s question about his surprise was once again dismissed, and his pleading look ignored. He wouldn’t have to wait long, but his curiosity was almost overwhelming him.

Once they were done, Evelyn told Alistair to go to his room and put on his armor. Alistair felt his eyes go wide. He didn’t know he had it with him. His bags were packed by his servants back at
Skyhold at Evelyn’s instruction. They were going to fight something. That was obvious now. But what was it? What lived in that part of Orlais?

“Don’t try to figure it out now. Soon you’ll know,” Cullen told him.

“But I want to know nooooow,” Alistair whined.

Cullen just shook his head, smiling, making that damnably attractive scar pull tight, and nudged Alistair with his arm. With a resigned sigh, Alistair went upstairs with them.

His armor, sword and shield were neatly packed in a large trunk, and he put them on carefully. This was going to be exciting. He initially thought this was going to be just an excursion to get away from Skyhold. He was expecting them to go see some Elven ruins or have a picnic in the forest. This was so much better. He loved nothing more than to have a good fight, something that was sorely missing from a king’s daily list of activities.

After finishing, and making sure every strap was in the correct place, he went downstairs. This time he was not the last. Dorian in his battle mage armor was already waiting at the bottom of the stairs, but Evelyn and Cullen were still missing.

“Very eager, I see,” Dorian observed.

“You have no idea,” Alistair agreed with a grin.

He was about to pester Dorian about his surprise, when he heard the sound of footsteps coming from upstairs. Soon Cullen and Evelyn were at the top of the stairs. The sight of them took Alistair’s breath away. Cullen wore a full golden armor, bits of red material poking from underneath, while Evelyn had a burning scarlet rogue’s coat over tight brown leathers and high boots. They looked magnificent and powerful. Alistair’s never seen them like this – ready for a battle, lethal and beautiful, their weapons at the ready, their smiles just as dangerous, at least as far as his heart was concerned.

“You can pick your jaw off the floors,” Dorian whispered into his ear, making Alistair blush.

He still stared as they descended down the stair towards him. It was for him. All for him. Those two people conspired together to make him happy. Maker, was he lucky.

“Ready?” Evelyn asked him.

“I’ve never been more ready for something I know nothing about,” he answered.

Cullen clasped his shoulder and they were off to the stables. After mounting, they set off into the woods. Evelyn spurred her horse into a brisk gallop, and Alistair and Cullen gave chase after her. She was swift and graceful, riding between the trees, jumping over fallen logs, looking back at them, a smug smile stretching her perfect lips. They rode through a stream, water splattering around them. Evelyn’s laughter was beckoning them forward. Alistair saw Cullen digging his heels into his horse’s flanks, attempting to reach Evelyn, who shouted “Come and get me,” back at him. Alistair also attempted to force his horse into a quicker pace, feeling more alive than he did in years.

Try as they might, they couldn’t overtake her. As soon as they were nearing, Evelyn’s horse jumped into action with more vigor that before. In the end, Evelyn stopped by the small camp that has been set up at the edge of a clearing. She dismounted easily, and stood waiting for them, hands on her hips.

“Couldn’t catch me, could you?” She showed all her teeth in a broad grin.
“You are the best rider of us all,” Alistair conceded, getting off his horse next to her.

“Don’t you know it,” Evelyn purred. Alistair blushed, remembering her on top of him, just a few days ago, her strong thighs at his sides, her fingers digging into his chest as she bounced up and down over his cock.

“I was close a few times,” Cullen said, making Alistair remember where he was.

“That you were, but I do think we can all agree that I’m the one who should always come first.”

Alistair chuckled, half expecting Cullen to stammer something out or just turn away, but instead the Commander just smirked.

“That is an excellent rule,” he said, giving the reins of his horse to an approaching servant.

Dorian was just appearing over the tree line, riding at a moderate pace.

“Had to make an entrance, did you?” Evelyn greeted him when he drew near.

“I’m not breaking my neck in those woods,” the mage answered, dismounting.

“We’re leaving our horses here?” Alistair asked, wondering what they were going to be fighting that would not permit for a combat on horseback.

“Yes. They might get spooked,” Cullen explained.

“Does everyone have their potions?” Dorian demanded.

They all checked their belts. Alistair didn’t pay attention to the flasks when he was equipping them, but now he saw health potions, restoration tonics and Antivan fire grenades. They had to be fighting something big if they needed all of those.

“If we’re all ready, I think we should be off,” Evelyn ordered, taking the lead.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter gives the perfect example of why both betas and Oxford commas are essential. I always believed that the Oxford comma is very important, but for whatever reason, I initially forgot about it in a crucial place. "He allowed himself some indulgences in the form of cheese platters and wine, hunting and taking lovers" without the comma after "hunting" makes this a very different story, which the ever vigilant jennybot221 pointed out. Without her this would be a disturbing tale of a king who enjoys hunting the people he bedded. So thank you Jenny, and thank you Oxford comma.

This was the first time I wrote from Alistair's point of view, and I hope it turned out all right.

Comments and kudos are to me what cheese is to Alistair.
The three men followed Evelyn without another word. Alistair felt his veins pulsing with pure excitement, restless energy making his steps quicker. This was going to be a true adventure, he was sure.

They didn’t speak as they trudged through the open field, tall grass brushing over their legs. It was strangely quiet. There were no birds chirping, no animals grazing nearby. Under different circumstances Alistair would call the silence ominous, but he wasn’t worried.

At last they stopped near the edge of a cliff, staying like this for long moments. Alistair was about to ask what they were waiting for, when he heard a distant roar, and the unmistakable flapping of huge wings. Soon a giant, blue and yellow shape appeared on the horizon.

“A dragon?!” Alistair exclaimed.

“Are you happy?” Cullen asked, his voice betraying some uncertainty.

“Are you kidding me? This is the greatest thing you could come up with!” Alistair assured him, affixing the shield to his arm and pulling out his sword. “Let’s show this beast who’s the boss.”

They all took positions, Evelyn and Dorian further away, their weapons at the ready, while Cullen and Alistair moved to the front. Alistair felt himself taking a step back as the ground shook when the dragon landed with a loud thud. Quickly, he advanced, aiming for its' hind leg. Cullen circled to the other side, avoiding the long tail. Alistair couldn’t get distracted with watching everyone’s movements, but he heard Evelyn’s arrows whistling through the air in rapid succession. There was a burning smell as Dorian’s fireball hit the dragon’s stomach. The beast reared up, twisting to the side, forcing Alistair to run back. After making sure it was safe, he moved ahead again, attacking the vulnerable flank.

On the other side there was the sound of something exploding – Cullen threw the fire grenade at the dragon, and then pressed his advantage. Enraged, the creature lunged for the ranged fighters. Alistair couldn’t allow it to get close to Evelyn or Dorian, so he ran in front of the dragon, blocking it’s path, hacking at its front leg. He tried to shield himself but the animal was too quick, and the king was knocked down, feeling the impact deep in his bones. Before he could even reach for a health potion, he felt Dorian’s healing magic pulse through him. The dragon didn’t pay Alistair any mind as he was getting to his feet, focused instead on Cullen and Evelyn, who redoubled their efforts to distract the beast.

Alistair took advantage of the opening they provided and moved towards the dragon’s tail, cutting it deeply, watching as the dark blood seeped into the ground. The dragon let out a piercing scream, turning around. Before it could try and take a bite out of Alistair, there was a volley of fiery arrows, crippling its front leg. Despite the obvious pain, the creature looked even more determined. It snapped its jaws angrily, but Alistair managed to bash it with his shield, disorienting it. Blindly, the dragon stumbled to the side, and Alistair heard Cullen’s scream.

“Cullen?!?” he called, panic in his voice, as he slashed at the beast, desperate to get it away from Cullen.
“I’m fine!” Cullen shouted. “Thanks for the barrier, Dorian.”

“That’s what I’m here for. Just keep this beast far away from me,” the mage called back, throwing another precise fireball at the dragon’s side.

It felt like an odd dance, as the creature turned round and round, and they spun with it, advancing and retreating. From time to time there was a muttered curse and a sickening crunch of someone getting injured, but the full stock of potions and Dorian’s well placed barriers and healing spells kept them all in the fight. Whenever Evelyn or Dorian were hit with the dragon’s ice breath, Cullen or Alistair would distract the creature long enough for them to regain their bearings.

The warriors were usually too close to the beast to be affected, but when the dragon suddenly jumped sideways and retreated, Alistair was left exposed. The stabbing pain of ice hitting his body was frightening, cold tendrils wrapping around him, freezing him in place, his raised sword arm useless. The dragon advanced on him, and he couldn’t even scream, but then Cullen was in front of him, shielding him with his body, while Evelyn sent more arrows at the dragon, one of them piercing its’ eye. Cullen knocked the dragon’s thrashing head away with his shield.

The ice slowly dissipated, and Alistair could move again. Quickly he ran closer to the dragon, slicing through the weakened tendon of its hind leg. The creature could barely move at this point, its front and back leg on the right side all but destroyed, yet its’ ice attacks were unrelenting. Evelyn kept aiming at its head, advancing cautiously. Alistair moved behind the dragon, taking care not to spook it, and joined Cullen on the left side.

Cullen slashed away at the front leg to allow Evelyn to take point on the opposite side and hopefully repeat her perfect shot on the dragon’s remaining eye. Suddenly the dragon took a swipe at Cullen, throwing him to the ground. It raised its deadly claw again over Cullen who could only lift his shield up in defense. Alistair dove to Cullen’s side, his sword at the ready. The creature screeched as both warriors plunged their swords into the soft tissue between its talons, sending a spray of blood around them. It quickly jerked back, and almost took the swords with it. There was an explosion on its other side and the dragon whirled away to face its attacker.

“Can you get up?” Alistair asked Cullen.

“I don’t think so. It’s my leg. I can’t move it, but I’m all out of potions.” Cullen grunted.

“Take this.” Alistair pulled out his last potion and uncorked it.

“I can’t…” Cullen’s words were cut off as Alistair pressed the flask against his lips and poured.

Out of the corner of his eye, Alistair saw Evelyn jumping from side to side, avoiding the frosty breath, and trying to aim her bow.

“Quickly,” Alistair urged. He sprang to his feet and ran to rejoin the battle, knowing that Cullen was right behind him.

“Dorian, send another fireball at its neck,” Evelyn shouted.

There was the whoosh of fire, the sound of arrows cutting through the air, and then a blood curdling scream, cut short, as the dragon spasmed, and fell to the ground. Alistair jumped back, narrowly avoiding being flattened by its massive head.

The beast was dead. Alistair’s heart was still beating wildly, his muscles tensed for an attack, but the creature laid immobile. He sheathed his sword and took a deep breath.
“We did it!” Cullen shouted, throwing his arm around Alistair’s shoulder.

“Wooo!” Evelyn screamed, running towards them.

Before they could prepare themselves, Evelyn threw herself at them. She was a slight woman, but with her speed she managed to unbalance them. Alistair swayed to the side, pulling Cullen with him, and in a moment they were on their back in the dirt, Evelyn sprawled atop them. After his breath returned to his lungs, Alistair started laughing, and Cullen and Evelyn joined in.

They only stopped when there was a sound of someone clearing his throat. Craning his neck up, Alistair noticed Dorian standing over them with an amused expression on his face.

“I think the three of you need to clean up,” he said. “Dirt, sweat and dragon blood are not a good mixture, no matter what Bull keeps saying. There’s a small pond not far away. You can go take a swim there, and I’ll get back to camp and order this thing to be properly... disassembled.”

“Thanks Dorian. That’s an excellent idea,” Evelyn told him, getting up.

“I’ll be waiting for you back at the estate,” the mage added, before walking off.

“Cold water sounds divine right now,” Cullen said, getting up and offering Alistair a hand to help him up.

“The last to the pond is a filthy Orlesian,” Evelyn shouted, breaking into a run.

Cullen and Alistair exchanged a glance before following her. Alistair wouldn’t have believed that he was capable of sprinting after fighting a dragon, but there he was, running through the forest in full armor, jumping over logs and getting smacked in the face with branches.

At last there was a glimmer of blue between the deep green leaves. Evelyn was already throwing off her bow and quiver, and working on her belt. Cullen and Alistair stopped their mad run next to her, breathing heavily.

“Who lost?” Evelyn asked.

“He did,” Cullen and Alistair answered at the same time.

Evelyn chuckled, dropping her belt and unbuckling her helmet.

“No matter. The most important thing is that I won,” she announced, now working on her long gloves. “Get out of that armor.”

Cullen and Alistair scrambled to obey, starting with their weapons, and then pulling at buckles and straps of their armor. Alistair silently cursed all the complicated fastenings. Evelyn in her light rogue’s armor was undressing much quicker.

“Don’t get distracted,” she told him, noticing him looking at her.

“As my lady wishes.” Alistair inclined his head, and focused on the task at hand.

“I think you need some help with that,” Evelyn announced after some time.

Alistair glanced up from his shoulder to find Evelyn standing at the edge of the pond in only her smalls and breastband. Her honey blond hair was loose around her shoulders, rustled by the gentle breeze. Their trysts always took place at night and it was breathtaking to finally see her in the full light of day, radiant in the sun.
Cullen had to be as enthralled by the sight as he was, since he was standing motionlessly, staring at Evelyn, his vambrace hanging from his arm by a thread.

With a smirk on her face, Evelyn sauntered over to Cullen and pulled the last fastening holding the vambrace in place, making it clatter to the ground. Next she moved to his breastplate.

“Don’t just stand there. Undress,” Evelyn told Cullen, who snapped out of his daze and started working on his other vambrace. “We’ll be with you shortly,” Evelyn told Alistair, looking over her shoulder. “In the meantime continue what you were doing.”

Alistair nodded once, resuming his actions. Stripping out of armor was not usually particularly alluring, and yet this was exciting. He fervently hoped something similar was going to be taking place that evening at the estate. They were still full of energy from the fight, and in that state things could easily get out of hand, but Alistair wanted it to be a conscious decision on Cullen’s part. Also, doing the activities he had in mind out in the open would be highly dangerous.

Glancing up, he saw Cullen pulling off the undershirt that clung to his body, while Evelyn knelt before him, working on his greaves. Alistair couldn’t tell what he liked more – the sight of Cullen’s tight muscles, shining with sweat, or Evelyn in that position. Both held a special appeal.

In a moment the greaves were gone, and Cullen was pulling off his boots. Evelyn now moved to Alistair, lending a hand where it was needed. When he was done with his boots and pants, Cullen joined her, working quickly and efficiently. Alistair wasn’t expecting him to help, and he took this turn of events as a good sign.

When they were done, they stood together for a moment, the three of them almost naked, dirty and tired, but happy. Alistair itched to touch them, but resisted, only his gaze lingering on their exposed skin, illuminated by the sun.

“I think it’s time we got in,” Evelyn announced.

“Wait.” Cullen craned his head to the side, as if looking for something. “I think there’s… Yes.” He started laughing, lightly at first, then apparently not able to contain his mirth, louder and louder, his sides shaking.

“What is it?” Alistair asked, a bit nonplussed, casting a glance at Evelyn, who just shrugged.

“It’s just…” Cullen whipped some moisture from the corners of his eyes. “I believe I will be able to explain it to you soon, but not now. The point is – there’s a waterfall a bit further up. We could jump in from the top.”

“And you found the waterfall so hilarious?” Evelyn asked, arching one brow at him.

“It’s a symbolic waterfall,” Cullen said, as if that explained everything. “Come on.”

He grabbed their hands and pulled them into a run, next to the side of the pond, and then up the slope from which the waterfall descended. They allowed him to drag them without question. Alistair suspected Evelyn was just as shocked and delighted by Cullen’s enthusiasm as he was.

They were slightly out of breath when they reached the top, stopping at the point where the water was spilling over, rushing with a gentle sound.

“Ready?” Cullen wanted to know.

“Absolutely,” Alistair assured.
“I’m ready to take the plunge,” Evelyn said, winking at Alistair.

Cullen squeezed their hands tightly.

“One, two,” he counted, “and three.”

They jumped forward, a joyful scream on each of their lips, as they were free falling through the empty air, only tethered to each other. Finally they breached the surface, making a loud splash, their hands still clasped. The water was cold and bracing, and Alistair kicked his feet quickly to get his head above water.

“This is certainly a day full of excitement,” Evelyn said after resurfacing.

“And it’s not even over,” Cullen observed, a small smirk on his lips.

Alistair and Evelyn exchanged a look. What did he have in mind? Was it something innocent or was he catching on to their plan, and more importantly, embracing it?

“You have hair in your eyes,” Cullen told Evelyn, letting go of their hands, and gently brushing the wet locks from her face.

“Do I still look pretty?” Alistair questioned teasingly.

“Always,” Cullen assured before turning his eyes toward Alistair. “But if you feel left out you just have to say so.” He removed some errant hair from Alistair’s forehead with a tender gesture.

Alistair felt his breath catch in his throat. This version of Cullen was downright devastating. With a parting smile, Cullen swam away to the more shallow part of the pond. Evelyn’s eyes were wide, making Alistair laugh.

“I’m afraid I’m starting to get my hopes up,” Alistair murmured in a low voice, so that only she could hear.

“Me too. Me too,” she responded, before following Cullen.

Alistair watched as she swam until she found solid ground under her feet, and splashed Cullen, who turned around with a gasp and splashed her back.

“Alistair, help me!” Evelyn called out.

“She attacked me first, she’s the aggressor, help me!” Cullen shouted, turning his head away, and blindly hitting the water.

Alistair laughed before diving in, opening his eyes in the water and swimming close to the bottom, until he saw two sets of legs. He grabbed their ankles, making them slip and fall under. Triumphanty, Alistair poked his head up, and watched as Cullen and Evelyn struggled to get back up.

“Very ungallant, Your Highness,” Evelyn chided, after spitting some water in his general direction.

“Enemy of my enemy?” Cullen asked Evelyn, a glint in his eyes.

“You’re on, partner,” Evelyn called back.

They both turned on Alistair, two large torrents of water hitting him in the face.
“Stop, I’m sorry, I miscalculated.” He laughed, uselessly trying to defend himself as the water kept pouring over him.

He couldn’t quite see what was going on, so he gasped in shock when he felt a pair of slick arms around his neck, and two slippery legs wrapping around his middle from behind.

“How do you surrender?” Evelyn whispered into his ear.

“I do. I surrender. I’m willing to bend the knee,” Alistair responded.

“I don’t think that’s necessary at this very moment,” Evelyn said, as Cullen stopped the water assault. “But later tonight…” she added in a low whisper.

Alistair grabbed her thighs, squeezing lightly, running his hands up and down the wet flesh, his mind already conjuring up images of what could happen at night. Evelyn giggled at his touch.

“How do you think Dorian will be annoyed if we keep him waiting?” Cullen asked, eyeing the two of them in a calculating manner.

“I don’t think so, but I’m starving,” Alistair responded, realizing how true his words were. A horse race, a fight with a dragon, and then a chase through the woods and a swim made for hungry work separately, but together they were downright murderous.

“Let’s get out then,” Evelyn decided, digging her legs into Alistair’s sides, urging him to carry her out.

Alistair obliged, stumbling only slightly as he saw Cullen getting out before him, his tight white smalls leaving next to nothing to the imagination.

“Great view,” Evelyn commented. Alistair made a choking noise in the back of his throat. “I love the forest, so lush and green,” Evelyn added. “Or did you think I had something else in mind?” she questioned innocently.

“Yes, forest. So great. Would love to get my hands on all the supple leaves, grab a thick branch,” Alistair muttered, getting them safely to the bank.

“Were you saying something?” Cullen asked, stretching out on the grass next to their equipment.

“We were just admiring the majesty of nature,” Evelyn quickly responded, sliding down Alistair’s back.

Cullen made a hum of agreement, stretching his arms and propping his head on one of his hands, the other falling at his side. Every curve of his muscles was on display, dotted with droplets of water.

‘Not fair,’ Evelyn mouthed to Alistair, who nodded his head vigorously, before returning to staring as a bead of water gently slid down Cullen’s neck, between his pectorals and over his hard stomach, disappearing into his belly button.

“Join me. You have to get dry somehow,” Cullen invited.

Evelyn and Alistair were next to him in a flash, laying down as close as they dared.

“I can’t remember a day better than this,” Alistair said, squinting in the light, smiling. It was the truth. Whatever happened or didn’t happen that night, this would forever remain one of his most cherished memories.
“That was the idea,” Cullen told him, his fingers gently brushing against Alistair’s.

Their hands tangled and Alistair sighed softly. He wanted to add something, but was too tired. The sun was warm on his skin, lulling him into sleep. ‘Just a moment,’ he promised himself before drifting off.

“Wake up sleepyhead.”

The words were faint at the edge of his consciousness.

“It’s time to get up.”

He opened his eyes a crack, and saw two smiling faces hovering above him.

“I don’t wanaaaa,” he complained.

“There will be food,” Cullen promised.

“Now you’re talking.” Alistair allowed himself a small smile.

Cullen and Evelyn got up and grabbed his hands, heaving him up. When they let go of him, Alistair rubbed the remnants of sleep from his eyes, and started looking for his clothes.

They dressed up quickly, not putting all of their armor on, and gathering the rest it in their arms.

The walk to the camp seemed longer than before, since they weren’t running this time. When they finally reached it, Alistair heard his stomach growl loudly.

“Time for another race?” Evelyn asked.

“I’m in,” Alistair agreed, giving his armor to a servant before casting about for his horse.

The mounts were soon brought to them and they set off at a brisk pace, riding through the darkening forest, chasing the setting sun. Naturally, Evelyn was first, but didn’t say a word about it, instead dismounting quickly and walking to the estate.

“Where do you think you’re going?” she asked Alistair when he made to go into the dining room.

“To eat?”

“No no no. You’re putting on something proper before you eat,” she told him sternly.

“But I’m hungry!” Alistair protested.

“We’re doing this thing right,” Evelyn insisted.

“Arguing only takes time, and you know you can’t win. Better get dressed,” Cullen called to him from the top of the stairs.

Alistair looked at him and smiled. They were doing it right. For Cullen.

“I’m going to break the record for the quickest dressed king,” Alistair announced, bounding two steps at a time. He couldn’t wait for what was to come.
This is my first crack at an action scene. It says some pretty bad things about me that writing about three people having sex comes more naturally to me than a wholesome dragon fight. Oh well...

Next week the smut begins. Hope y'all are ready, cause it's about to get filthy.

As always, comments and kudos are greatly appreciated. And if you see mistakes, don't hesitate to point them out.
The decision

Cullen had been standing in front of the mirror for an inordinate amount of time. He was adjusting his belt over and over, smoothing the creases in his jacket, and checking his hair. He was most comfortable in his professional clothes. The breastplate was not only protecting his body, but also giving him a sense of comfort. In those fancy things Evelyn gave him, he felt a bit awkward. At least he didn’t have to wear the bright uniform he had in Orlais, which despite everyone’s compliments, made him feel ridiculous. Evelyn had the good sense to order him muted dark brown breeches and a deep red jacket.

Or maybe he was obsessing over his appearance just to get his mind away from that nerve wracking decision that was before him?

No. That was not it. Not exactly. He’d already made up his mind. It was not his choice that was the source of his worry, but rather the execution of it. How would it all even work? He had a few ideas, visions that invaded his dreams and waking hours alike, but it was all entirely up to Alistair and Evelyn. He was doing it for them.

Well, that was a big lie. Cullen was honest enough to admit that to himself. He was no sacrificial lamb, laying himself down on the altar of their carnal lusts. He wanted it. He wanted them. More than he should, more than should be possible. Yet he would not force them to do what they didn't want to do. Instead he would acquiesce to what they desired. He would get as much out of it as he could, but only within their comfort zone.

The impending separation from Alistair was what made Cullen truly worried, each passing day bringing them closer to it. He found himself counting down the days, feeling them slip through his fingers all too quickly. Alistair would be back, but at some unspecified time, and the waiting would be unbearable.

Selfishly, Cullen worried that if Alistair went away just like that, without anything happening between them, then he might change his mind, might be so discouraged and disappointed that the king would just give up on the whole idea. That notion frightened Cullen. Could he truly live the rest of his days with that missed opportunity hanging over him? He probably shouldn't think of Alistair as so fickle and changeable, but Cullen couldn't help his fears. If anything were to happen, it had to be during that trip, he was sure. Away from Skyhold they were so much more free, and of course it was the last time they were going to be together for a long while.

Till that very morning Cullen wasn't sure what he was going to do, but he was leaning in one direction - in the direction of giving in, of saying yes. What shifted the balance in favor of embarking on this affair, was an accidental conversation he’d had with Dorian on the way to the estate.

"I miss Bull," the mage announced after they've been riding together for a short while.

"We'll be back in Skyhold in no time," Cullen answered.

He was a bit surprised by their relationship, would never have been able to foresee it, but it looked like Dorian and Bull were great together, and that was all that mattered. So much separated them, and yet they found their way to each other. It was rather uplifting. That Dorian missed Bull after only a few days was touching.
"I know. It's just... Sometimes I can't quite believe it all. I can't believe that I'm happy. I can't believe that I found that with him. When we're apart it's easier to feel that way." The mage sighed, looking away for a moment. "I wasn't sure I'd ever find something permanent with someone. At first I didn't see my involvement with Bull as something different from my previous dalliances with men. I thought it would just be a quick thing, a strange adventure, but it just grew and grew, and I find myself in love with the giant horned idiot."

"I'm really glad for you. And for him as well." Cullen smiled.

They both deserved nothing but the best, and it truly pleased him that they were getting that. They had so many obstacles to overcome, but they were facing them together. If they could make it work, anything was possible.

"Not as much as I am." Dorian grinned at him. "It's so strange to think that it could just as easily not have happened. I didn't have much time to think about it, I wasn't sure if I was making the right decision, wasn't sure what I was getting myself into, but I took a chance, and it was one of the best things that's ever happened to me."

Cullen wasn't sure what to say to that, so he just nodded. It was odd how that situation resembled his own. He could also risk something unconventional, that potentially would bring him joy, or he could give up and not even try. Dorian made that decision quickly, without the benefit, or maybe hindrance, of a long consideration. Perhaps that was better - to follow an instinct. His mind was dissecting the whole thing, turning it over, seeing every potential problem, but his heart was not conflicted at all.

He knew what he wanted. He wanted Alistair and Evelyn. And not only physically. He craved their affection, enjoyed the thought of sharing simple moments with them, of just being together. He was... He was in love with them. The thought did not appear suddenly. It was at the back of his mind for a long time, and now he stopped fighting to repress it. If he had to make a quick decision, relying on intuition alone, he would chose them in a second.

"Cullen?"

He snapped back to attention.

"Yes?"

"Is everything alright?" his friend asked. "It looked like I've lost you there for a bit."

"I'm fine. I'm better than fine." Cullen felt himself smiling broadly. "You've just helped me make a very important decision."

Dorian had no idea, but his impromptu confession about Bull really put things into perspective for Cullen. He was almost certain before, but now he had no doubts about the correct course of action. All his fears and insecurities and doubts were pushed aside. He would pursue this thing. He would take the happiness that was offered to him.

"And what kind of decision is that?" Dorian tilted his head, looking curious.

"Just a... uh... crucial one," Cullen mumbled.

He was not explaining the situation to Dorian. For one, he was fairly certain Alistair and Evelyn would not want anyone to know about it, and for another, as much as he liked Dorian, he was not eager to discuss those things with him, or anyone else for that matter.
"Have your secret then." The mage pursed his lips, trying to appear annoyed, but not really succeeding.

"Love is worth it, isn't it?" Cullen asked after a moment.

"It absolutely is," Dorian confirmed.

They rode in silence the short way to the estate. Cullen was calm. It felt great to not be at war with himself and have decided on a course of action.

After his talk with Dorian he had been certain, but now he was questioning himself again. His decision was unchanged, yet he was nervous. It all had to be perfect. How was he to pull that off? He was surely going to make some terrible blunder, his awkwardness ruining the moment.

He adjusted the cuff of his jacket for the umpteenth time. There was no turning back. He couldn't keep them waiting.

Instinct. He had to remember that. There was no point in overthinking. He had to let things happen naturally. And they would. He had to believe that.

With renewed determination, Cullen turned away from the mirror, walked to the doors, and headed down the stairs. Under his breath he hummed an old tune which made keeping intrusive thoughts out of his mind easier. He stopped before the doors to the dining room, took a deep breath, and pressed the handle.

The room was bathed in a soft glow from numerous candles placed around it. The huge table was gone, replaced by a small round one, and behind it sat Alistair and Evelyn. They appeared to have been deep in some intimate conversation before he entered, sitting close, their hands twined on the table.

When Cullen entered, their gazes were instantly on him. He stared back, taking them in. They looked elegant, but not intimidatingly so, Alistair in simply cut but finely made burgundy jacket, and Evelyn in a blue gown with a plunging neckline. What held his attention the most, though, was the way they looked at him - happy to see him, expectant, excited, but still uncertain. He didn't know how or when to alleviate their worries, to say that he agreed, that he belonged to them, completely, and that they had no reason to be cautious. He had to figure it out soon, since he didn't wish to hold them in suspense.

"Where is Dorian?" he asked instead, knowing that they couldn't even begin talking about anything of that nature with the mage present.

"He was very tired, and went to his room. He asked us to apologize to you for his absence," Evelyn explained.

"Oh." It was good news. There were going to be no distractions, no waiting. And yet... And yet Cullen was in a way hoping to have a moment more to gather his wits. His determination was wavering a tiny bit again.

"Come, sit with us. I do hope you're not too tired?" Alistair asked.

"Actually, I don't see myself sleeping for hours," Cullen responded, walking to the table. It was a simple statement of facts, but it came out as flirting, and he was glad for that. It sounded natural, and he was proud of his steady voice.

"Any particular plans?" Evelyn wanted to know.
"I want to spend some quality time with my two favorite people," Cullen told them, sitting in the only available chair, at Evelyn's left side, wanting to pat himself on the back for that line. He was not doing terribly at all.

"And who might those people be?" Alistair asked, playing coy, trying not to smile.

"A certain pair of famed dragon hunters," Cullen responded.

"Awww, Evelyn's here, but Dorian's gone," Alistair said, a fake frown on his face.

Out of the corner of his eye, Cullen could see Evelyn rolling her eyes, a fond smile on her face.

"I'll have to specify then," Cullen told them. "Evelyn is one of those people, but the other one is a handsome and charming king, who thinks he's very funny, and most of the time is, but sometimes goes a bit overboard."

That was bold, Cullen decided, feeling his heart hammering inside his chest. For his part Alistair was blushing, his mouth opening, and then closing again.

"I think you broke him," Evelyn observed, pouring wine.

It was an incomparable feeling to know that he could render the chatty Alistair speechless. Cullen wondered how far he could push this thing. Maybe initiating things would not be so bad?

"Should I not compliment you anymore, your majesty? It might be dangerous to your health." Cullen smirked over the rim of the goblet Evelyn passed him.

"I'm all for danger. Darkspawn, dragons, compliments - all very necessary. What is life without a bit of danger?" Alistair responded, apparently recovering, and quickly taking a large gulp of wine.

"Then I shall endeavor to provide it for my enchanting and brave monarch," Cullen announced. When he let himself go, it was almost too easy. It was like something shifted inside him, and now instead of being flustered by Alistair's and Evelyn's flirting, he was the one making them squirm in their seats with his smooth words. Or at least he was doing so to Alistair, whose eyes were wide open. Evelyn on the other hand was grinning.

"Shall we eat? I think we should eat. I'm hungry. Aren't you hungry?" Alistair rushed to say, starting to pile things on his plate.

"Great idea. I do believe we will need our strength," Cullen agreed, reaching for a plate of meat. He couldn't quite believe how he was doing all of that, but it pleased him when he saw Evelyn and Alistair exchange a look of disbelief, before they started smiling broadly.

"In that case, I think I should already get a second helping. Our Commander knows best," Alistair said, putting more and more food on his plate.

"Yes Commander. We trust you." Evelyn nodded, also gathering a solid portion.

"And your trust will be rewarded," Cullen promised, his voice dropping lower.

He started slicing his meat, glancing up at them. What was happening? He couldn't recognize himself in this confident man who made vague yet lewd promises.

Evelyn might have sighed at his words, the sound was faint enough that he couldn't be sure.

"Shall we toast?" she asks, apparently composing herself.
Alistair lifted his goblet, still chewing his food, cheeks distended.

"What should we drink to? The dragon killing?" Evelyn asked.

"To us," Cullen corrected.

Evelyn gave him an approving smile.

"To us," she agreed.

"Ush," Alistair mumbled.

They clicked the goblets and drank deeply.

A silence fell over them as they ate. By an unspoken agreement they did not savor the delicious food, instead focusing on speed and efficiency.

"Will we be having some kind of dessert?" Cullen asked casually, almost done with his food.

There was no response, so he looked up from his plate, just in time to see Evelyn smiling and biting her lip.

"Good question," Alistair agreed. "I normally expect something of that sort at the end of a meal, but I can't see anything here."

"I decided to dispose of that, hoping that we'd have something more entertaining to do with our mouths. We mind find that something in my chambers," Evelyn said slowly, cautiously, as if she was still not certain Cullen was on board with the whole plan.

Cullen felt himself blush a bit, but bravely smiled.

"An excellent idea," he said.

"Splendid." There was palpable relief in Evelyn's voice, and Alistair was also looking more relaxed. "More wine before we go?" Evelyn offered.

Both men nodded, and she poured again.

Cullen was about to take his goblet in hand when he noticed a stray drop of wine sliding down the neck of the bottle, nearing Evelyn's fingers. He was about to say something, when Evelyn bent down to lick it up, her pink tongue darting out, running up the length of the bottle. Cullen must've made a sound, because she looked at him, now only her lips pressed gently to the rim of the bottle, and she winked at him. All he could think about was that tongue on his cock, which had begun to harden.

Cullen didn't think anything could be more erotic than this display, but then Alistair bent his head down to the other side of the bottle, chasing another errant drop of wine with his tongue. When he reached the tip, his lips brushed Evelyn’s, barely connecting over the rim.

At this point Cullen was painfully hard, and frantically wondering if they knew exactly what that made him think of. A memory arose, from what seemed like ages before. That day in the garden, the chess game, the moment they talked about going down on their knees. They knew very well what they were doing - back then as well as at this moment. That notion thrilled him.

With a decisive motion, Cullen lifted the goblet to his lips and drained it quickly, before getting to his feet.
"I'm done with the food," he announced.

He was half expecting Alistair to protest, but the king just pulled away from the bottle and got up from the table, the wine forgotten. Evelyn followed suit, and soon they were all walking out of the doors. They were silent, and there was tension in the air, thick with things unspoken, some secret worry. Did he rush it? Did he make it crass and unromantic?, Cullen worried.

"Do you want this?" Evelyn's voice was barely above a whisper as they walked up the stairs. "You don't have to."

She must have misinterpreted his expression, taking it for regret or apprehension.

"Yes. Maker, yes. I just don't know what you want exactly," Cullen confessed, as they stopped at the top of the stairs.

"To make you happy. To be happy. With you," Alistair said, and those simple words touched Cullen deeply.

"That's what I want too," he told them.

"Then don't worry anymore." Evelyn grabbed his hand and then took Alistair's as well, and allowed the king to lead them to the Inquisitor's bedroom.

When the doors clicked shut behind them, Alistair turned the key in the lock, and they just stood around for a moment, glancing at each other. Cullen was guessing neither of them had done anything quite like this, and they didn't know how to proceed, where to start. In his fantasies things were already in motion, they were in the middle of some act of passion. His imagination never worked on the mechanics of getting there.

It was Evelyn who broke the stalemate, moving close to Cullen, giving him plenty of time to stop her. When he didn't, she pressed her mouth to his tentatively. Their first kiss. After all this time, after the denial and fear and worry, finally. She was ready to pull away after a short moment, but Cullen wasn't, tangling his fingers in her soft hair, kissing her back, hard. She moaned against his lips, her hands going to his arms for support as she opened her mouth to him, allowing him to do what he pleased, but still participating, her tongue moving against his.

When they broke apart they were both panting and grinning. Cullen could stare at her flushed cheeks and gently swollen lips forever, marveling at the fact that he was the cause of that, but there was another person in the room who couldn't be neglected.

Alistair was smiling at them, standing slightly to the side. Cullen's never kissed a man before, never even held a man, but he wanted to, Maker how he wanted to. And not just any man, this man. He extended a hand to Alistair, who took it, their warm fingers tangling as Cullen pulled his king closer. They stood like that for a heartbeat, their eyes locked, timid. Alistair was about to say something, his lips parting, but Cullen didn't want to hear a joke or a reassurance that he could back out. He silenced the unspoken words by kissing Alistair.

It felt foreign and new, and he couldn't get enough. The scratch of stubble against his face, the hard muscles against his hand when he ran it over Alistair's arm to his neck, the deep groan when he pushed his tongue into Alistair's mouth - it was all unimaginably exciting. And then Alistair was pressing against him, their bodies flush, and Cullen felt their hard cocks sliding against each other. It was his turn to gasp shamelessly, breaking the kiss, this new sensation threatening to overwhelm him.
They remained like this, their foreheads touching, their hips rocking slightly, their breath mingling. They were in a world of their own, and it startled Cullen a bit when he felt another hand, this one small and soft, on his shoulder. Evelyn joined them, and Alistair was turning his head to kiss her. The two of them looked achingly beautiful together, loving and sensual, their lips parting, moving in a practiced dance. Far more quickly than Cullen would've anticipated, Evelyn moved away, and turned to him, kissing him again, while still embracing Alistair.

Just as quickly as she appeared, she was gone, taking a few steps back. They watched her as she reached behind her back and pulled at some knots, letting her dress fall to the floor. Underneath she wore undergarments slightly similar to those she wore when they played Wicked Grace - a tight ivory corset, pushing her breasts improbably high, tiny lacy smalls, and a pair of white stockings. It was undeniably erotic, but Cullen wanted to see what was underneath. He's imagined her body countless times, and now he could finally find out what the reality was.

"Take it off," he said, barely recognizing his voice, deep and commanding, brooking no argument.

Evelyn's hands went to the ties at her back instantaneously. She would obey whatever he said, Cullen realized with a thrill. She and Alistair were the ones pursuing him, but he was always in control. They were waiting for him to be ready, and at last he was.

"Help her," Cullen told Alistair, and the king let go of him, striding to Evelyn.

Cullen stood by the doors, watching as Alistair moved behind Evelyn, his large frame dwarfing her, his hands joining hers at the back of the corset. Evelyn stopped working at the fastenings, instead looking right at Cullen, her lips slightly parted, desire evident on her face. At last Alistair got her corset undone, and the thick material dropped to the floor, revealing Evelyn's full breasts, tipped with hardened pink nipples. Cullen felt himself licking his lips. He almost made a step forward, eager to touch all that tempting flesh, but he restrained himself.

"You like what you see, I presume?" Evelyn asked.

The one thing Cullen could not control was his blushing. His face grew hot at her words. It was a bit ridiculous, since he had every right to stare at her. Determined to fight his embarrassment, Cullen looked up at her face, and noticed Alistair pressing his cheek to her head.

"I remember the first time I saw her like this," the king recalled, grinning. "Quite the sight."

His palms went to Evelyn's hips. The Inquisitor gasped, and Cullen realized that Alistair was grinding his cock against her arse. Evelyn leaned back against him as he ran his large hands up her sides, and then cupped her breasts, pinching the nipples, making her moan. Her lids almost dropped close, but she kept staring at Cullen. He wanted to be the one touching her, but at the same time he loved the sight of Alistair playing with her.

"Off with the rest," Cullen ordered.

Wordlessly, Evelyn kicked off her shoes, and turned around, giving Cullen a great view of her arse. She bent down to work on one stocking, further displaying her generous backside, while Alistair knelt to do the same to her other leg. Soon the flimsy material was thrown to the side, and they both stood up. Alistair must have noticed where Cullen's attention was drawn to, because he grabbed Evelyn’s arse, squeezing, his large hands filled with her soft flesh. Evelyn gasped at the contact, and turned to look at Cullen over her shoulder, a smirk on her face.

Cullen felt the sudden urge to stride over to them and rip Evelyn’s smalls off, but again he resisted the impulse. Alistair let go of Evelyn’s arse, and placed his hands on her hips, turning her around, so
that she was facing Cullen again. His fingers hooked in the sides of her smalls, sliding them down slowly, bearing the blond curls at the apex of her thighs, and then letting the smalls fall to the floor.

Cullen couldn't say anything, only able to stare at the tantalizingly soft skin, round curves, and strong muscles. Evelyn was a vision. Even the scars scattered over her frame were not detracting from her beauty, looking instead like strange adornments.

Alistair's hands migrated up from her thighs, one moving to tease her breast once more, and the other sliding between her legs, a thick finger dipping into her folds, prompting a whine to escape her lips.

"She's so wet Cullen. Come, feel," Alistair invited, his hand working over her cunt.

All Cullen wanted to do was touch her, but once he started he was afraid the game would be at an end - he would just end up taking her, and he wanted to tease all of them a bit longer.

"Help him undress," Cullen said, directing his words to Evelyn.

"But I was having so much fuuun," Alistair whined.

Cullen shot him one stern look, and the king let go of Evelyn, who then turned her back to Cullen, and started unbuttoning Alistair's jacket. For his part Alistair unfastened his belt, and started unlacing his breeches.

Being a Templar meant that Cullen saw his brothers stripping countless times. It was always a difficult moment. He wanted to stare at their sculpted bodies, and felt immediate shame when that desire arose. The glances stolen while he tried to get dressed or undressed as quickly as possible were never enough.

Now he could stare as much as he wished, and he took advantage of that fact. Evelyn unfastened the jacket's clasps promptly, and Alistair shrugged the thing off, before grabbing the bottom of his undershirt and lifting it up. Just like that time during Wicked Grace, Cullen was entranced by the sight of the king's rippling stomach and sculpted pectorals. And those arms, Maker, those arms. It was a true treat to see the corded muscles shifting with his movement. All that strength, all that power - it called to Cullen.

When the undershirt was lying somewhere behind them, Alistair smiled at Cullen briefly, before pulling off his boots and socks. Meanwhile Evelyn walked behind the king. This time it was her turn to rest her hands over Alistair's hips, her slender fingers holding onto the fabric of his breeches. Her head was poking from behind Alistair, and she held Cullen's eyes for a moment before deftly undoing the laces and pulling Alistair's breeches and smalls down.

First, Cullen saw Alistair's flushed cockhead poking up, then, slowly, the rest of his magnificent shaft was uncovered, inch by agonizing inch. The old instinct told him to look away, but he kept his eyes steady, watching as Alistair's cock sprang completely free at last, thick and proud. Cullen wanted to touch it so badly, to know how different it would feel than his own, to see if Alistair responded to the same things he did, to find out how different pleasing a man was to pleasing a woman. Cullen noticed Evelyn's small hand sneaking out and wrapping around Alistair's cock, stroking up from base to tip, making Alistair groan.

"We're both so ready for you," Evelyn murmured, repeating her motion, looking at Cullen in wanton invitation.

"So so so very ready," Alistair breathed out in agreement.

That was too much. With furious speed Cullen ripped one boot and then another from his feet, and
started on his jacket.

"Will you not let us help?" Evelyn asked.

That gave Cullen pause. No rushing. This was too important, too precious for any kind of haste.

"Come here then," he said.

Evelyn and Alistair were next to him in moments, she going for the belt, and he for the jacket. Alistair's large fingers were surprisingly dexterous when he unbuttoned Cullen's jacket, lingering longer than strictly necessary, running his fingertips over his chest and stomach. Evelyn quickly rid Cullen of his belt, and moved to the lacing of his breeches. He felt her fingers brushing insistently over his erection, forcing a gasp from his lips.

There were so many sensations, Cullen could hardly focus on one. His jacket was dragged from his arms, Alistair's hands warm and sure as they traveled down them. Evelyn meanwhile was caressing his abdominal muscles over the waistband of his breeches. Cullen watched when her fingers and Alistair's met on his flesh, Evelyn exploring lazily, and Alistair taking hold of the hem of Cullen's undershirt. Cullen lifted his arms up, and Alistair dragged the shirt up, making sure to touch his flesh on the way up, and then throwing the undershirt away. At the same time Evelyn stopped teasing, and yanked Cullen's breeches down, and suddenly he was just as naked as they were.

A part of Cullen was strangely worried about being exposed in that way, but he didn't have the time to dwell on that, because Evelyn was kissing him, her arms around his neck, and then she was moving over his cheek, down the line of his jaw, and finally her lips were on his neck. As soon as she left his lips, Alistair took over, his mouth hot and demanding. Cullen kissed him back, pushing his tongue into the king's mouth unceremoniously, earning a surprised groan.

The feeling of Alistair's mouth opening eagerly was almost enough to distract Cullen from Evelyn's actions, but then her teeth were scraping against his nipple, and Cullen shuddered. Almost as if that was his cue, Alistair removed his mouth from Cullen's. The king's nose brushed against his face, as he placed small kisses over his jaw. It was a chaste counterpoint to Evelyn who was tracing the ridges of Cullen's stomach with her tongue.

When Alistair reached his neck there was a hint of teeth in his kisses. When he moved over Cullen's chest there was a swipe of tongue. And then there was a quick lick over Cullen's nipple, gone before he could truly appreciate it. Meanwhile Evelyn was kissing along the lines of Cullen's pelvis, wringing frustrated gasps from his throat, as she avoided touching his cock.

It all felt maddening and beyond perfect. Cullen wondered if he was dreaming. His eyes were closed, so he opened them. The sight that greeted him made his breath stutter. Evelyn was already on her knees before him, her clever mouth focused on his hip bone. Alistair was just kneeling, and there was something so deeply arousing in that gesture that Cullen couldn't contain an appreciative sigh. His king was going down on his knees before Cullen, ready to please him, and it was both satisfying, and humbling, to be allowed to see that side of him.

The deep seated shame was urging Cullen to stop this, or at least not look, but he couldn't. He watched with rapt attention as Evelyn's and Alistair's mouth were moving over his abdomen, finally reaching his cock, ghosting over its surface, barely there, but still making him hiss in pleasure. They both looked up at him, and he exchanged a glance with each of them in turn, seeing wicked promises in their eyes.

He wasn't sure how he didn't just come right on the spot when their lips touched over his cock, and drifted up together, reaching the tip. He was already weeping pre-come, and soon there were two
tongues lapping at it. Cullen's eyes drifted shut. It was too much. It was his every secret fantasy made flesh, and somehow better than he could've imagined.

There was a warm mouth enveloping the head of his cock, and a tongue tracing the veins over his shaft. Cullen had his suspicions, but he had to know for sure. Forcing his lids open, he saw that indeed it was the king with his mouth over the tip of his cock, sucking gently. A man was sucking him off, and it felt decadent, yet natural, right.

Cullen could've let them do what they pleased, since he was enjoying it immensely, but he already felt like he was too passive. He needed to take charge. Testing the limits of how far they would allow him to go, he put his hands on both their heads, tangling his fingers in their hair. He tugged at the strands experimentally. Alistair hummed against his cock, and Evelyn made a small mewling sound. Feeling them acquiesce, Cullen tightened his grip. He looked at his fists full of soft locks, marveling at the power he had over those two people before him. With gentle strength, he pushed Alistair's head down, encouraging him to take more of his cock into his mouth. The king's lips stretched nicely over his girth. Alistair sank down further without being prompted, while Evelyn retreated, observing with obvious desire.

Alistair knew what he was doing, bobbing his head, changing his pace, keeping Cullen guessing as to what was going to happen next, making him gasp at every new sensation. Cullen could come like this, but that would be too easy, too quick. With a decisive pull on his hair, Cullen made Alistair let go of his cock, leaving it slick with his saliva. The king made a sound of protest, but Cullen paid him no mind, coaxing Evelyn forward. At first she was just licking up and down his cock teasingly, until Cullen tugged at her hair. Obediently, she took him into her mouth, going slowly, her tongue working in tandem with her lips. She felt different, her lips fuller, her tongue smaller. They both had distinctive techniques, their own way of seeing to his pleasure, and it felt amazing to be able to experience that, one right after the other.

"Maker, I knew this was going to be something to see," Alistair murmured. "You look so pretty like this Evelyn. Doesn't she, Cullen?"

Those words send another sharp spike of arousal down Cullen's spine. The king liked to talk, and it should come as no surprise that he would also do that during sex. Cullen wanted him to never stop.

"Yes, she does," he agreed.

"And I know how gooood she feels. Can't say I didn't teach her a thing or two," the king continued smugly.

This was going to end far too soon if Cullen didn't stop right then. The image of Evelyn tending to Alistair in that way was powerfully stimulating. It gave him an idea. With regret, he pulled Evelyn off of his cock.

"One day I'll have you finish me off like this, swallow my seed. Both of you," Cullen announced, looking from one to the other, seeing their breaths go shallow. "But not this time." He was once more surprised by his own confidence - the surety that there were going to be more encounters like this one, and that they would obey his wishes in this one.

"What do you want to do now?" Evelyn asked, her tone husky.

"Get up." Cullen let go of their hair and offered them his hands, which they took, rising up. "We will need a bed for this."
Soooo... It begins. After pornshadowin, it's time for pornhanger (cliffhanger for porn).
It's not like you don't know what's going to happen, but still...

I'd like to thank all of you who are reading, bookmarking and commenting. Your feedback means so much to me, so please continue. I've never done anything quite like this so I hope you're enjoying it.
Before Cullen could say another word, Evelyn and Alistair were next to the large and luxuriously appointed bed. They both leaned against the intricately carved bedposts, smiling at him expectantly. Cullen knew exactly what he wanted to do, but wasn't sure if they'd be comfortable with that idea. They should've discussed those kinds of things before, so that he'd know the boundaries in which he could operate.

"Don't think too much, it's not good for you," Alistair admonished, a teasing note in his voice.

"Just say what you want," Evelyn encouraged. "Don't worry that it will be too much. You have no idea the things we've talked about, the plans we've made - you can't possibly shock us."

"You've talked about this in detail?" Cullen asked, eager to know all the things his new lovers desired.

"Yes. He'd go down on me and I'd tell him how it will be with you there, watching us, telling us what to do, finally joining us. Or he'd fuck me and whisper in my ear about what you'd do to me, what you'd do to him." Evelyn's voice was sultry, every word filled with lust, her eyes unfocused, as if she were reliving those moments.

"What things?" Cullen pressed on, needing to hear every lurid detail, impossibly excited by Evelyn's admission, by the vision of the two of them together, needing him with them, invoking him, involving him from the start.

"You go first." Alistair grinned.

There was no use in debating this - Alistair was far too stubborn to argue with. It was time for action. If they had confidence in him, then Cullen had to have a bit of confidence in himself as well.

With decisive steps, he moved towards Alistair, and grabbed his hair. He looked at his king for long moments, taking in his flushed cheeks, swollen lips, and dilated pupils, marveling at how desirable, how perfect he looked.

"Maker, how could I have waited this long?" Cullen muttered before kissing Alistair.

It was not as hard and hungry as before. It was a lazy exploration, their tongues pressing together languorously. Alistair must have been focused solely on that sensation, because he moaned in surprise when Cullen touched his hip, his fingers creeping over Alistair's stomach, finally wrapping around his erection.

It was a completely new sensation to Cullen - handling another man's cock. Experimentally, he stroked up, with a tight grip, the way he liked it, and was rewarded with another moan. He couldn't get enough of that sound. He pulled away from Alistair's mouth to allow him to fully vocalize his feelings.

Tentatively, Cullen put his other hand to work, running it over Alistair's chest, familiarizing himself with the sharp reliefs of his muscles. The king's eyes were closed, his mouth open, and he's never looked more attractive, wracked with pleasure at Cullen's hand. Cullen brushed his thumb over the tip of Alistair's cock, smearing the pre come, earning yet another broken sound. He started pumping
Alistair’s cock in earnest, watching the changes in the king’s facial expression as he tried going faster or slower.

"You better... Maker... You better stop, if you want me to be of any more use," Alistair mumbled between groans. "But I'm fine with whatever at this point. Just a... ah... a warning. Grey Warden stamina is not all it's cracked up to be."

It was a timely warning indeed. Cullen had no intention of it ending like that. Not this time. He just got caught up in watching Alistair, in relishing giving him this pleasure.

The king made a half-frustrated half-relieved groan when Cullen let go of his erection.

"I need you on your back," Cullen informed him, giving his chest a light push.

Alistair obeyed, laying down, not saying anything, but on his face Cullen could clearly read unspoken questions. Did he think Cullen would...? Would he want him to...? Cullen could hardly even think those words, suddenly overcome with the desire to push that boundary as well. But not right then. He had a plan, and he would stick to it.

"Move up, we'll need more space," Cullen instructed, before turning to Evelyn.

"I almost thought you've forgotten about me," she told him, pretending to be offended.

"You know that's impossible," Cullen responded, before bending down and pressing his mouth to hers.

Cullen did not wish to keep Alistair waiting for too long, but he also wanted to give Evelyn the same attention. He's fantasized about her body for so long, and now he was free to touch it, and it was a blessing. He run his fingers up from her hips, over her waist, and to her breasts, filling his hands with the heavy flesh. He brushed his fingertips gently over her stiff nipples, making her sigh, and then pinched them, forcing a happy gasp from her throat.

Reluctantly, he let go of one of her breasts, his hand moving south, over her soft belly and between her legs. As soon as he parted her lower lips, he felt how drenched she was. This evidence of her obvious desire made him groan, as he stroked between her silken folds. Evelyn was canting her hips, bringing his head down, kissing him desperately.

It couldn't end that soon for her either. Cullen slowed down his ministrations, barely touching the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex. He relinquished her mouth and bent down to capture her nipple in his mouth. It was definitely the right thing to do, as Evelyn moaned loudly, fisting her hand in his hair.

"I do love her breasts as well, and she loves to have them played with." Alistair's voice drifted to Cullen. Glancing to the side, he saw the king laying on the bed, one hand propped behind his head, the other running over his own cock leisurely. "Imagine how pleased she'll be to have two mouths sucking on her tits."

As if to agree, Evelyn moaned once more, and Cullen sucked harder. He wanted to give in now, to pushed her on the bed alongside Alistair, and let him join in, let her have what she clearly wanted so much, but that was not part of the plan. That was an idea for another time. At this rate he wasn't sure they'd ever be able to get through all the things he wanted to do with them.

For now he had to stop, to do it the way he originally envisioned it, so he let go of Evelyn's breast and removed his fingers from between her legs.

Alistair's words were proving to be almost too much - filthy and exciting. Cullen brought his fingers to his mouth and sucked on them, licking the last drops with his tongue, humming appreciatively at the taste, looking right at Evelyn, who was blushing furiously. This felt almost more intimate than actually having his mouth between her legs.

"If I didn't have other plans, I'd lick at your sweet cunt until you scream," he told Evelyn, and delighted in her high pitched whine. "Now go show me how you pleased the king all those times I wasn't there with you."

Alistair groaned happily, apparently liking that plan. Evelyn knelt on the bed, crawling between Alistair's slightly parted legs, sitting on her haunches. It would do for the moment, but soon she'd have to readjust her position to fit Cullen's design.

Standing at an angle, Cullen had a perfect view of the two of them, of how Evelyn started by lapping at the crown of Alistair's cock, swirling her tongue around, the corners of her lips twitching into an impish smile at his groans. At last she took pity on him, engulfing the head into her mouth and sucking. Alistair's hand went to the back of her neck, not exactly directing her, only touching her flesh gently. Evelyn moved her mouth lower, grasping with a fist what she couldn't fit into her mouth, then returning to licking up and down the shaft.

Alistair was making breathy sounds, clearly enjoying Evelyn's skillful ministrations. Cullen wondered for a brief moment if he shouldn't be somehow jealous, but that feeling seemed an impossibility - the people he cared for the most were bringing each other pleasure, acting for their own benefit, as much as for his satisfaction, and all he was experiencing was joy.

Maybe not only joy. There was eager hunger in him. As much as he enjoyed watching them, he needed to join them.

Still with a bit of uncertainty, he moved to stand right behind Evelyn.

"Get on your hands and knees," he told her, glad his voice did not betray him, and still sounded commanding.

Evelyn quickly moved into position, her arse up in the air, and parted her legs in clear invitation. Her folds were glistening, and Cullen couldn't wait to be buried inside her. She wanted it, had no problem taking both men at the same time. Brazen, wanton, and so perfect.

Cullen placed one of his hands on her hip gently, stroking his thumb over her skin, still marveling at its softness. As much as he ached to enter her, he took the time to commit the sight before him to memory. Evelyn's body before him - round arse, full hips, small waist, long, tangled honey blonde hair moving as she bobbed her head up and down. Alistair - his lightly freckled skin, taut muscles dotted with perspiration, mouth forming incoherent sounds, eyes closed.

And then those eyes snapped open and connected with his own, and Alistair smirked at him.

"Aren't you going to fuck her?" the king asked, his voice breathy. "We've talked about something just like that. I told her how good your cock will feel inside her, while mine fills her mouth. And how another time you'll be the one having your cock sucked while you watch how I pound into her."

Both Cullen and Evelyn made their own sounds of pleasure at the words. That alone was threatening to push Cullen right over the edge. Those were some of the most obscene things Cullen's ever heard, and he's had to deal with frustrated soldiers spinning wild tales in the barracks.
He grabbed his cock, and touched the head to Evelyn’s entrance. She moved against him, wanting him inside her, but he resisted, stroking the tip between her folds, up to the top of her sex, feeling her wetness. The needy sounds she was making were driving him mad, and finally he guided his cock back to her entrance, pushing in. He tried to go in slowly, to control his movements, but her slick heat was pulling him in. Attempting to stay grounded and not get carried away, he grabbed both her hips, his fingers digging into her soft flesh. As his grip tightened, he feared he would leave bruises, but that worry left his mind when he heard Evelyn sigh over Alistair's cock, and felt her hips shift. He couldn't hold on anymore. He pushed in to the hilt, burying himself in her.

It's been so long, he couldn't even remember when it was exactly that he'd last been with a woman. Cullen feared he wouldn't be able to last very long. Not with Evelyn wiggling her arse, pressing against him, and still pleasuring Alistair, her gasps getting louder when she was just licking at his cock.

Cullen pulled out slightly, and pushed back in slowly, trying to find the right rhythm. Evelyn sighed, and so he repeated it, only this time a bit harder, and her voice got higher. He tried once more, pulling out halfway, before returning with a powerful thrust. Evelyn's mouth was back on Alistair, and her voice was muffled, but her mounting pleasure was evident in the way her body was moving eagerly.

"Don't hold back. Fuck her like you mean it - she likes that," Alistair told him.

At that moment Cullen looked up, meeting Alistair's gaze. The king was watching him all this time, arousal clear on his face, and Cullen found that idea deeply exciting.

"You like to watch me fuck her, don't you?" Cullen growled, slamming inside Evelyn, still maintaining eye contact with Alistair.

"Yes, sweet Andraste, yes. I love it," Alistair agreed. His breath was ragged, the hand at his side fisting in the bedding, as he too grappled for control.

"And you..." Cullen let go of Evelyn's hips with one hand, and grabbed her hair, pulling her head up, making both her and Alistair groan at the loss, looking her in the eye. "Do you like it? Do you like my cock in you? Do you like being shared by two men?" he asked, his voice thick with lust, as he fucked her without restraint.

"Yes, yes, yes," Evelyn chanted. "I'm so close, so close, please..."

She was trembling under him. A part of him wanted to give her all she craved right away, but another part, a part he hardly recognized as belonging to him, egged him on to prolong the moment, to tease her beyond the point of reason.

Fortunately for Evelyn, Cullen also knew that he was precariously close to his own end. He let go of her hair, allowing her to return to working on Alistair's cock, and moved his hand between her thighs, finding her pearl and circling it rapidly. That prompted a long moan from Evelyn, and soon after a prolonged "Fuck, Maker, fuuuck" from Alistair.

Cullen looked up just in time to see the moment the king found his release. His eyes were screwed shut, and his muscles tense as he rote out the waves of his pleasure, still shouting profanities mixed with the Maker's name. At that moment Cullen realized that Evelyn was still moving her head gently, swallowing Alistair's seed. The thought almost made Cullen come right then and there. He held himself in check with every ounce of strength left in his body, desperate to have Evelyn find her completion before he did.
Finally she stilled, only moaning, as Cullen fucked her frantically, rubbing over her nub.

"Come for me," he urged, giving her a particularly hard thrust.

That was enough, and with a broken cry, she came, her cunt gripping his cock tightly. He kept fucking her through the waves of ecstasy, on the knife's edge of pleasure himself, wanting to prolong the experience for her.

"Come inside me," Evelyn pleaded, between moans.

At last he allowed himself to let go, roaring as the climax took him over. There were spots dancing before his closed lids, and his legs were all but giving out under him. He was still holding on to Evelyn, trying to stay upright when pleasure was ravaging his body. He couldn't tell how long it lasted, but time was a strange concept, when he was experiencing this much pleasure.

When Cullen was finally spent, he opened his eyes, and was greeted by the sight of Evelyn laying on her stomach between Alistair's thighs, her hands on his legs, her arse held up only by Cullen's own hand. He let go gently, and she sagged on the mattress. Cullen felt unsteady standing up, so he knelt on the bed. What was he to do now? Lie down? Go away?

"Come up here," Alistair urged in a low murmur, making Cullen's nervous thoughts scatter.

The king extended a hand to him, and Cullen took it, moving to lay down. Meanwhile Evelyn grabbed a piece of someone's clothing to quickly clean herself off, before she crawled up the bed, nestling between them.

They laid like that for long moments. The only thing breaking the silence was the sound of their breathing. Cullen stared at the gilded ceiling, trying to focus on the slight crack running along some tiles, instead of the disquiet rising up inside of his mind. He felt the warmth radiating from the body beside him, scented the heavy smell of their passion in the air. It was real, it just happened, and he had no idea how to proceed. There were no rules, no etiquette to guide him.

“I can hear you thinking from all the way over here,” Alistair muttered.

“I… Yes, I’m thinking,” Cullen admitted.

“Do you regret it?” Evelyn asked. Her voice sounded small and frightened. She sat up, looking down at Cullen with large, scared eyes.

“Maker, no!” He reached out and touched her cheek gently, smiling at her. “I just don’t know what to do,” he admitted.

“Wait until we can do it again?” Alistair suggested, turning on his side and propping his head on his hand so that he could look at Cullen.

“This answers the question of the immediate future, but what about later? What about tomorrow? What about…” Cullen couldn’t finish. He promised himself that he would take only as much as they were willing to give. He loved those people, but had no right to demand anything of them.

“What do you want to happen?” Evelyn asked.

“That’s immaterial,” Cullen responded, moving into an upright position, feeling like the discussion merited some kind of decorum, even if they were all naked.

“Well, that’s ridiculous. Really really dumb. How can it not matter?” Alistair demanded, also seating
up, crossing his arms over his chest.

“I can’t say that I’m here just for you. I’m here for me too, but as far as the future of this… whatever it is… is concerned, I have no claim on you. You dictate the terms,” Cullen explained calmly.

“Alistair is right - this is really really dumb. You have a claim on us, you can demand whatever you want. We’re all equal here. Your feelings are important to us. I…” Evelyn halted, then pressed her lips together, nodded her head, as if to herself, and continued. “I love you.”

Cullen felt his heart stop for a moment and then start pounding madly again.

“And I love you too,” Alistair announced casually, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, as if it was not a huge, earth shattering revelation.

“Why?” was all Cullen managed to say. It was absurd, unthinkable. Those two people loving him? No. It couldn’t be. They cared about him, he was sure of that, but love?

Alistair and Evelyn exchanged a glance, and then looked at Cullen, appearing almost as confused as he was.

“Out of all the things you could’ve said, this is something I would’ve never expected,” Evelyn said, her head cocked to the side as she regarded him curiously.

“You don’t have to say anything back. It’s fine. We won’t cry. Too much.” Alistair laughed nervously, his joke falling flat. “Honestly, it’s alright. We’ve sprung this thing on you, and if you want to, we don’t have to speak of it.”

Cullen needed to say something, to express all the emotions roiling inside of him, desperately clawing to get out. He was shocked, disbelieving, scared that somehow he misunderstood something, and underneath it all - hopeful.

“Why would you…? How could you…?” The word was at the tip of his tongue, but his stomach was tight, and his throat was constricted, and it would not come out. His palms were sweaty, his heart was hammering, and it all felt like he was suffering from some kind of illness.

“That’s an odd question,” Evelyn started slowly. “Love is… love is strange. It’s not something to be explained or understood. It just happens. You can find a person who would be worthy of it, who sounds perfect, but for whom you can’t feel a thing. Then you can find someone wrong for you, someone who’s bound to hurt you, and still you love them. There are no patterns, no logical reasons.” She took a deep breath, and Cullen felt her tensing, preparing herself. “Stop me if this is making you uncomfortable,” she told him. He just nodded, not sure what he should be expecting.

“I’ve loved you for a long time now. I can’t say how long exactly, but it seems like the feeling was in me always. I tried to deny it, since you were not responding to me.”

Cullen felt guilty when he saw the hurt in her eyes. He never thought he was causing her this much pain. He believed his feelings run deeper than hers, and he was only protecting her. How wrong he was.

“I thought my heart was full of it,” Evelyn continued, “but then Alistair appeared, and I was ashamed of my interest in him, since I still loved you, even if I couldn’t admit to the feeling. And then we started talking about you, and it all made sense. We embarked on this crazy journey, and we fell in love while working on seducing you. We didn’t speak of it much, but we knew that this was bigger that one night, or even several nights. There is something here, between all of us. It’s unconventional, it’s not a thing of story books, but it’s true.”
Cullen just nodded, even if he could hardly believe it all. She loved him. She’s loved him as long as he did her. And she loved Alistair as well. He should’ve been jealous, but he couldn’t. He should’ve regretted denying her affections all this time, and yet he couldn’t do that either, because if he did start a relationship with her, he wasn’t sure if anything could’ve happened with Alistair, and he didn’t want to imagine not being with him, not getting to know him, befriending him… falling in love with him.

“I’m not sure I should be opening my big mouth, because I’m bound to make this thing so much more awkward, and your ominous silence does not help, but I also for the life of me cannot keep my mouth closed, so here goes this … whatever this proves to be,” Alistair announced. “My life as a king is full of responsibilities and compromises. I suppose I should not complain, but it feels like I have less freedom than my subjects. I’ve never asked for it, never desired power… This is not my sob story, but if we keep doing whatever it is we’re doing, you will listen to me moan incessantly about all my royal duties.”

Cullen felt a small smile working its way onto his face. He wanted to tell Alistair that he would not mind in the slightest if he complained to him, but he also wished not to interrupt him.

“So… What I was trying to say,” Alistair kept going, “is that my life was not very happy or exciting. It was tedious. Each day was like the other, and I couldn’t see it getting any better. As much as I hated it, and would never admit it to anyone else, the breach, Corypheus, the whole end of the world situation shook things up, allowed me to be more active. And even more importantly, it allowed me to meet the two of you.” He grinned at both of them, and Cullen was helpless not to return that smile, which evidently pleased Alistair. “Both of you had this thing about you that made me even more stupid than usual.”

The king stopped abruptly. Cullen saw his face turn to shock and slightly worry, and then back to amusement. Turning his head, he saw Evelyn glaring daggers at Alistair. A memory flashed in Cullen’s head. That day Evelyn told him about Alistair’s departure, Cullen came up with the dragon hunting idea. She called him brilliant for that, and the conversation lead to her explaining how Alistair used to call himself stupid, and how she hoped Cullen would help her convince him he wasn’t. Now Cullen had an idea as to what she could’ve meant then.

The silence lasted a few tense heartbeats, during which Cullen wasn’t sure if he should remind Evelyn of their discussion and offer help. At this point it would’ve been a bit inappropriate, he decided.

Evelyn said nothing, and after clearing his throat, Alistair kept talking.

“I was drawn to both of you, but I knew there was something between you two, and I had no desire to insinuate myself where I was not needed. Then Evelyn caught me staring at you during the banquet, and we had a very illuminating conversation, which started us on the path to… here. I’ve spent many lonely years on the throne, not truly able to connect to anyone, and then you two appeared, and maybe it will sound cheesy, but you gave my life colour. Everything before seems kind of bleak and glum, and then I met you, and now everything is all shiny and bright. It might be dumb, and weird, but that’s how I feel.”

Alistair looked at his own hands, wringing them in embarrassment. In his peripheral vision Cullen saw Evelyn pressing her hand to her chest, her lips trembling a bit. He knew what she felt. Alistair’s words were far from dumb or weird. They truly touched Cullen. He never imagined he could mean so much to someone, that he could be loved, that he could be… life changing.

“I love you too,” he blurted out, finally finding the words he needed to say.
Before he could fully process the fact that he said it, he was being tackled to the mattress by two warm and heavy bodies. He found himself flat on his back, two sets of mouths kissing over his face, occasionally pressing to his lips. They were almost smothering him, laying on him, tangling their limbs until he wasn’t sure who was where. He might have been unable to breathe very well, but he’s never felt better. His heart was light and his mind clear. A laugh of pure joy escaped his lips. He belonged to those two amazing people, and they belonged to him. It might not last, circumstance might tear them apart, but these moments with them would always be the highlights of his life.

At long last they rolled off him onto their backs, still remaining close, at his sides. Their hands migrated over his chest, meeting in the middle, their fingers tangling. He wasn’t sure if he could say something as eloquent and sweet as what Evelyn and Alistair did. He was not good with lofty declarations, so he grabbed their entwined hands, and moved them to rest over his heart, pressing them there, hoping they’d feel its’ hard beating, and know that it was because of them. In a moment his hand was covered with their other hands. They knew. They didn’t say anything, accepting his wordless gesture.

Chapter End Notes

Happy Sinday (Sunday with extra sin in it). My author's note would not be complete without a shitty pun.

I feel like Google Docs is kinkshaming me. It suggested I change "lovers" to "lover's". You don't get it, Google, he has two lovers, not just one. Get with the times!

As always, I greatly appreciate all your feedback. Kudos and comment give me life.
They lay like that for some time, just enjoying the closeness - the closeness of their bodies, but also the emotional closeness their confessions have allowed them. There were no more barriers between them. They were together in this thing.

“So about you calling yourself stupid, Alistair…” Evelyn said, breaking the silence, a hint of annoyance in her voice.

“I’m sorry, it’s just hard to stop once you’re used to thinking that way,” Alistair responded, his grip on Cullen’s hand tightening marginally.

Cullen hated the thought that Alistair was ever made to feel inadequate or stupid, that he was belittled and underappreciated. It would not stand.

“If I remember correctly, you’ve told me once that I’ll be the one to convince Alistair that he’s not stupid if he ever said it again,” Cullen offered. “I think now I know what kind of convincing you had in mind.”

At his words Evelyn all but jumped up, disentangling their hands, sitting up on her haunches, her bare breasts bouncing enticingly with her movement.

“You remembered that.” She beamed at him.

Cullen looked at Alistair, curious to see if the king was surprised, but he seemed completely unfazed.

“Right before she convinced me, she told me that one day you’ll have to do it,” Alistair explained, smiling at the memory.

“I believe my exact words were ‘we’ll fuck you until you agree with us’,” Evelyn told them.

Cullen felt his cock twitch at her words. It was still incredible to think of Evelyn and Alistair in bed together, talking about Cullen, wishing he was there with them, imagining how it was going to be with him there. He wasn’t sure what Evelyn had planned, but this time he wanted to see where her mind went, what was her desire.

“Do you have anything particular in mind?” Cullen asked, imagining countless possibilities, each more arousing than the next.

Evelyn looked at Alistair, then at the bedside table, and back at the king, who nodded once, a grin spreading on his face as some kind of understanding passed between them.

“Do you want to fuck him?” Evelyn asked, her eyes on Cullen, the breathy tone of her voice leaving no doubt that it was something she wished would happen.

Cullen was once again speechless for a moment, shocked in the best way possible. They wanted it, Alistair wanted him to… Cullen’s cock was hardening at the thought of this forbidden, sinful act, at the thought of being inside Alistair, pushing, stretching, claiming... He could hardly breath for the excitement, but that feeling was tempered by worry.
“I’ve never done this before. I don’t want to hurt you, Alistair,” he admitted hesitantly.

“It will be alright,” the king reassured him.

“We’ll talk you through it,” Evelyn added. “If it’s what you want.”

“I do believe he wants it.” Alistair jutted his chin, indicating Cullen’s half hard cock. “But I would like to hear him say it.”

Cullen swallowed nervously. He really did want it, but the fear of hurting Alistair was present in his mind. Still, he could not let fear rule him.

“I want to fuck you, Alistair,” he said, his voice coming out low and hungry.

He looked to the side, seeing Alistair’s cock harden. Cullen felt a strange mixture of arousal and tender affection, knowing that he was wanted in that way, that his most shameful desires were accepted, shared.

With a quick movement, Cullen rolled over, straddling Alistair, pinning him under his weight, their bare erections pressed together. They both groaned at the sensation. It was so much more intense without clothes between them. Cullen felt the slide of skin against his own, the hot, hard pressure, and it was even better than he imagined, more visceral, near overwhelming. He moved his hips, enjoying the friction, grunting in pleasure. Alistair’s eyes were wide, his mouth open on quiet gasps that went right to Cullen’s groin.

“Maker, I love the feeling of your cock,” Alistair whispered.

Cullen closed his eyes, trying to remain in control. Alistair’s words were going to be his undoing. To hear those things, in that voice, was almost too much, and yet he needed more.

“You liked sucking my cock?” he asked, opening his eyes to watch Alistair’s reaction, punctuating the question with a long roll of his hips.

“Oh yesss.” Alistair’s voice sounded obscene, and there was a dangerous smirk on his lips. “I loved your cock in my mouth. When I get you off like that I’ll have you shouting until you can’t remember anything other than my name. And now I’m going to thoroughly enjoy having you inside me.”

It was all Cullen’s fault. He asked, and he got his answer, and Maker it was destroying his composure.

“The mouth on you,” Cullen muttered. He was trying to sound scolding, but his words came out sounding full of wonder.

“Come and shut me up then,” Alistair offered, and Cullen quickly complied, kissing the king with all he had.

That kiss quickly turned open mouthed and dirty, uncontrolled and greedy. Their hips kept writhing together. Cullen knew they’d have to end it shortly, but he couldn’t bring himself to part from Alistair.

What made him break away was the sound of a light feminine moan. Cullen and Alistair turned their heads to see Evelyn still sitting with her legs parted, her right hand moving between them, while her left hand was tweaking her nipple. She was watching them, and she was pleasing herself, excited by their display. It should be embarrassing, and Cullen did feel a light blush creeping up his neck, but for the most part he was just impossibly aroused.
“Like what you see?” he asked, throwing her words from earlier back at her.

“Very much,” she responded, unabashed, still touching herself. “Don’t stop on my account. Or maybe continue on my account.”

For a moment Cullen was tempted to do just that, but there were other things to be done. He glanced at Alistair, who smiled at him.

“I believe the lady needs some attention,” the king said.

“I do think you’re correct,” Cullen agreed, getting up, moving away from Alistair and crawling towards Evelyn.

He knelt next to her and kissed her, his hand drifting to replace hers on her breast. He didn’t enjoy her soft mouth for long before there was another face pressing to his, pushing him away. Cullen allowed it, kissing down Evelyn’s neck instead. She shivered under their touch, her fingers going to their hair. With a gentle movement she lied back, pulling them with her, so that they were hovering over her prone body. Cullen suspected Alistair was also marveling at her beauty, at her hair fanning around her head, at her eyes twinkling with mischief, at her lips stretched in an inviting smile. She belonged to them, and neither of them would probably ever fully accept that miracle.

“Alistair, I remember you mentioning that our dear lady had a particular desire she would wish fulfilled,” Cullen said glancing down to Evelyn’s breasts.

“Oh yes, I did mention that.” Alistair’s hand moved from Evelyn’s sternum down to her nipple. She made a broken gasp when he caressed the very tip with a single finger. “I had her moaning incoherently when I switched from one breast to the other, using my mouth and my hands.” He gently traced a path to her other nipple. “Together, sucking on both of those perfect tits at the same time we’ll have her wailing.”

Evelyn closed her eyes, chewing on her own lip.

“Would you like that?” Cullen asked her.

“Yes, please, please, pleeease,” she gasped out.

Cullen and Alistair exchanged a look, before bending down to her breasts. At the first contact of their lips she sighed. As soon as he started sucking, Cullen felt Evelyn’s fingers returning to his hair, holding him close. He looked up at her face and saw her watching them intently. He smiled at her and her lids fluttered. When his tongue lapped at her nipple, a keening sound escaped Evelyn’s lips. Cullen wasn’t sure if they could get her to come like that, but it wouldn’t take much to bring her over the edge. He moved his hand between her legs, and met Alistair’s in the same place. Apparently they had the same idea. Their fingers brushed, and Cullen pushed Alistair’s down, to Evelyn’s entrance, while he busied himself with the nub at the top of her sex. Those additional sensations made Evelyn’s voice raise higher. Cullen continued lavishing attention on her breast, his free hand squeezing the soft flesh, while his lips, tongue and teeth working relentlessly.

“I’m so… I’m so…” She couldn’t finish the thought, and instead only their names tumbled out of her mouth as she rode out the waves of her pleasure.

When he was sure she was done, Cullen relinquished her nipple with a parting suck, and lied down next to her. He watched Alistair do the same. Evelyn was now running her fingers through their hair gently, a blissful smile on her lips.
Out of the corner of his eye Cullen saw Alistair lift up his hand.

“I think that calls for a high five,” the king announced.

Cullen laughed at the absurdly childish gesture, but nonetheless complied.

“You’re both ridiculous,” Evelyn said, trying to stifle her own laugh.

“We made you come in like 3.5 seconds. If that’s not an accomplishment worthy of a high five, then
I don’t know what is,” Alistair retorted.

“Isn’t there something you should be doing instead of being boastful?” Evelyn chided.

“Oooooh riiiiight. I was supposed to be getting fucked. How could I’ve forgotten?” Alistair pretended to be shocked.

Cullen chuckled, but deep down he felt a twinge of nerves. This could be either something amazing
or a terrible debacle, and he was afraid his lack of experience would lead to the latter.

Evelyn extricated herself from between them and moved to the head of the bed. Cullen tried to watch
and see what she was going to do, but Alistair effectively distracted him by tugging him closer,
finally maneuvering Cullen on top of him. They were close, every inch of their skin pressed together,
and Cullen momentarily forgot his worries when Alistair pulled him down for a kiss. There was no
space in his head for nerves as pure pleasure overtook him once more when their lips parted and their
tongues started their exploration anew.

Alistair’s hands drifted down Cullen's back, kneading the muscles on the way, and settled on his
arse. The king’s large fingers dug into Cullen’s flesh insistently, pressing their bodies even more
tightly together. Cullen gasped and shifted his hips, rubbing his cock against Alistair’s. Their legs
were tangled, but soon Alistair twisted so that Cullen was laying between his spread thighs. The
gesture left Alistair open and vulnerable, and Cullen admired and loved him even more for that trust.
Alistair knew how to let go, to not be in control, to rely on others, and Cullen hoped that one day he
could give himself over to the man beneath him in the same way.

Any other thoughts were scattered as Alistair rocked his hips and squeezed Cullen’s cheeks. Cullen
couldn’t let himself get lost in the sensation, couldn’t get off track, so instead of responding and
allowing himself to enjoy the blissful friction, he broke the kiss, raising up on his arms over Alistair.
The man below him was perfect in all his disheveled glory, with hair in disarray, and reddened
cheeks, which made his freckles stand out more.

Slowly, gently, Cullen touched his face, tracing the contour of his sharp cheekbone, and the defined
jawline, before moving to his neck, following a path of a vein pulsing rapidly under his fingertip.
Alistair didn’t say anything, his breaths coming in harsh pants, and Cullen was glad he was afforded
this freedom. He would soon need some instruction, but for now he enjoyed doing what felt natural.

His hand glided over Alistair’s clavicle, the firm shape of his pectoral, and teased the hardened nipple
briefly, before making a journey through the peaks and valleys of his sharply defined abdominal
muscles. Cullen allowed himself a moment to wonder at how it was possible that he loved the
softness of Evelyn’s curves and the hard planes of Alistair’s body just as much. He could not rightly
say that one thing was better that the other - they were just different, but both held a special appeal to
him.

When he reached Alistair’s cock, it was not as unfamiliar as before, but he suspected that Alistair’s
needy sounds were always going to send a thrill through him. He ran a firm hand over the straining
shaft a few times, staring down at Alistair, at his fluttering eyelashes and mouth opening in a shameless moan. That was good, he was good. He could do that. But he wanted to do so much more. Tentatively, he moved to touch Alistair’s sack, gently playing with his balls, watching for any sign of displeasure, finding none.

A hand on his arm startled him. He turned to look, finding Evelyn kneeling next to them, a vial in her hand.

“You’ll need that,” she said, offering the vial to Cullen.

He had an idea as to what he was supposed to do, but he froze for a moment.

Alistair and Evelyn had to both sense his nerves, because they were soon running their hands up and down his arms soothingly, smiling and murmuring that it was going to be fine. It was strange - his role was so much simpler than Alistair’s, logically he should be the one comforting Alistair, not the other way around.

In that moment Cullen wondered how it would be with their positions reversed. That was the thing he thought about the least, the desire that he repressed the hardest. He wasn’t sure when he would be ready to try something like that, but one day he hoped he could allow Alistair into his body. The notion was slightly frightening, but also exciting. He trusted Alistair, knew he would never hurt him.

Alistair had to feel the same, Cullen realized. He believed in Cullen, had no worries when it came to him. Cullen could not disappoint him, ruin the moment with his nerves and indecision.

With fingers that almost didn’t tremble, he accepted the vial.

“Talk to me,” he urged Alistair.

“Slick up your fingers. You need to stretch me out, get me ready for your cock,” Alistair instructed in a voice heavy with lust.

Cullen felt himself trembling at his words, and eagerly obeyed, pouring some of the liquid on his fingers, and leaving the vial where he could reach it, should the need arise. His hand returned between Alistair’s thighs, trailing lightly over his cock and balls, before finding his puckered entrance. Cullen circled it tentatively, familiarising himself with that part of Alistair’s body.

“Give me one finger. Don’t worry - you won’t hurt me. I can take it, I can take all of you,” Alistair told him, his hips moving, urging Cullen to act.

Emboldened, Cullen pushed forward, surprised to feel how easy it was - Alistair’s body accepting his slick digit without resistance, enveloping it tightly. The king made a low humming sound, clearly enjoying himself. Cullen started moving his finger in and out, his worries all but gone as he watched his lover’s enthusiastic reactions.

“Just like that,” Alistair panted. “See? Nothing to worry about.” He smirked up at Cullen. “Now give me another. I can’t wait to have your cock inside me.”

“Maker, Alistair, I know I was the one who told you to talk, but I’m not sure I can handle it,” Cullen admitted. His cock was uncomfortably hard and Alistair’s words made it difficult to go slow and gentle, when all they made him want to do was bury himself in that tight heat.

Alistair kept grinning, and Cullen pushed another finger in, wanting to turn any incoming smartarse remark into a moan. In that he was successful, watching with satisfaction as Alistair’s eyes screwed shut and he breathed raggedly. The fit of Cullen’s fingers was much tighter, but Alistair appeared to
be enjoying it.

His initial hesitation forgotten, Cullen moved his digits faster, scissoring them, feeling the muscles give way. Alistair was unrestrained, open, and responsive, and Cullen felt fierce pride at being allowed to be with him like that, at giving him pleasure.

“Another. I have to get another, before I can take that thick cock of yours,” Alistair told him, looking him right in the eye.

“Fuck,” Cullen hissed. “Stop talking or I’m going to come all over you before we can do anything.”

“Maybe some other time,” Alistair responds cheekily.

With a growl Cullen bent down to kiss him, to shut him up, because his control was hanging on by a thread. It was almost worse as he felt Alistair’s lips again, chapped, but soft. He pressed another finger in, encountering some resistance, mitigated by Alistair enthusiastically bucking up. They were kissing frantically, sloppily, and Cullen knew his movements had no finesse to them, but it was all uninhibited and free and perfect.

There was a note of surprise in their moans as a slick hand moved over their cocks, pressing them closer together. They broke their kiss and looked at Evelyn, who was smiling at them, her hand busy. She kissed them both in turn, her hand now focused on Cullen’s cock, spreading the oil.

“I’m ready,” Alistair breathed out.

Cullen opened his mouth to ask if he was certain, needing to be sure, even if his cock throbbed with the need to be inside Alistair. The words never left his lips, because Alistair just looked pointedly at him, making it abundantly clear that he meant what he said.

The lust coursing through Cullen’s veins dampened the flicker of worry he felt in the back of his mind. Evelyn’s hand retreated, but he felt her calming presence close by, not exactly participating, but still a part of this experience.

Gingerly, Cullen removed his fingers, and wrapped them around the base of his cock, guiding himself to Alistair’s entrance. The tip of his cock touched the ring of muscles, and Alistair moved impatiently, making the head of Cullen’s prick sink in. A series of expletives flowed out of his mouth as he felt that tight grip he’d felt on his fingers now embracing a much more sensitive part of his body. On instinct he pushed in further, and heard a groan that was not entirely pleased. That made Cullen immediately stop, fear like a heavy weight in his stomach. His eyes, which dropped closed in his rapture, opened up, scanning Alistair’s face.

“I’m so sorry…” he started, before Alistair cut him off.

“I’m not hurt. It’s just been a while. I do appreciate your enthusiasm, but if you could go slow at first…”

Relief washed over Cullen when he heard that his lover was all right. He could not bear to cause him pain.

“Anything. Anything you want, my love,” Cullen whispered, kissing Alistair’s face gently.

“You… you can move,” Alistair encouraged, his voice sounding a bit choked up.

Cullen followed his king’s direction, pressing in a bit, both of his hands clutching the bedding, as he tried to go as slowly as possible, despite the urge to just sheath himself completely.
“You feel so good inside me,” Alistair murmured. “Keep going. Don’t stop.”

That voice, those words - they were threatening to unravel him again, so Cullen went in for another kiss, still moving his cock forward at a measured pace. When he bottomed out, he still, pressing his forehead to Alistair’s, both of them sharing the same ragged breath, looking into each other’s eyes.

After a moment, Cullen felt two large hands squeezing at the cheeks of his arse, urging him to move. He complied, retreating before moving back in, establishing a slow rhythm of shallow thrusts. He wanted to go faster, harder, but remembered Alistair’s words, and kept himself steady. Besides, even this was pushing him towards orgasm faster than he would’ve wished.

“Don’t be so restrained,” Alistair told him. “I’m all good. Don’t hold back.”

“Are you sure?” Cullen had to ask, his hips already moving quicker.

“Fuck. Me.” Alistair punctuated each word.

Cullen’s control snapped, and he started to move in earnest.

“You look so good together,” Evelyn said, her voice breathy. “I could watch you two fucking for the rest of my life and never tire of the sight.”

But just looking wasn’t apparently enough for Evelyn, since soon her hand pressed between their bodies, wrapping around Alistair’s cock and pumping.

“His cock was inside me earlier this evening, and now it’s inside you. I know how good you feel. Our dear Cullen knows how to fuck a person right, doesn’t he?” she purred, looking at Alistair.

“Maker, does he ever,” Alastair agreed, his hips pushing in tandem with Cullen’s movement.

“I’m so close,” Cullen warned, his voice strained even to his own ears. The way Alistair and Evelyn talked, the way they looked together, the way they felt, was too much.

“Good, good, come. I’m there with you,” Alistair assured.

“First I’m going to hear you scream my name, see you cover your own stomach and Evelyn’s hands with your come,” Cullen announced with determination, his thrusts harder, but more controlled.

“Fuuuck,” Alistair swore.

“Yes. I’m fucking you, and you’re going to come over my cock,” Cullen told him, accompanying the words with a particularly powerful movement.

Underneath him, Alistair shuddered, and shouted, Cullen’s name on his lips sounding like a holy chant. Cullen felt some of the king’s seed splattered on his stomach, and it thrilled him to be marked like that. Just that thought was enough to push him over the edge, and with a shout of his own, he came inside his lover, lights exploding behind his closed lids.

When the sensation subsided, he collapsed on top of Alistair, comforted by the knowledge that he was not going to crush him under his weight. He was still inside him, still connected in the most intimate of ways. If all his life he’s been waiting for this man, to experience that with him, then it was well worth it. Absentmindedly, he nuzzled against Alistair’s cheek, and felt his arms running over his back.

“How was it?” Alistair questioned.
“Perfect,” Cullen answered without thinking.

“I know the feeling.” Alistair agreed with a happy sigh.

For a moment Cullen wanted to argue, to say that it was his first time, and he couldn’t be particularly
good, but he stopped himself. Alistair would immediately disagree with him, and what would be the
point of that conversation? And maybe it didn’t matter that it wasn’t perfect, because there would be
plenty of time for Cullen to practice. And besides, Alistair did look pleased, and the sticky evidence
of that was smeared on their stomachs.

The desire to clean up the cooling seed from their bodies made Cullen roll over to his back, but
before he could search for a cloth, Evelyn was pressing one into his hands, and doing the same to
Alistair.

When he threw the soiled fabric away, Cullen realized how tired he was. The day was catching up to
him.

“Evelyn?” he muttered, wanting to feel her close again.

“I’m here,” she responded, her hand reaching to him over Alistair’s chest, their fingers tangling.

“I’m happy,” Cullen told them, his voice low, as he pressed himself closer to Alistair, enjoying his
warmth.

“Me too,” Evelyn and Alistair answered almost simultaneously.

“I don’t want the night to end. I don’t want to sleep. We have so little time,” Cullen complained, a
long yawn escaping his lips, his lids fighting a losing battle to stay open.

“We’ll be together again soon,” Alistair promised, embracing Cullen tightly.

Soon was not enough. Cullen didn’t want to be parted from the two of them. He’s wasted so much
time, time spent overanalyzing his feeling, being scared and ashamed. He should’ve spent it with
them, making love, laughing, telling them how much they meant to him.

Cullen felt the need to make up for that lost time, then and there, but his body was too weak,
demanding its due. Any further words died on his lips as sleep claimed him.

He wasn’t sure how long they rested, but when he opened his eyes, the sky was still fairly dark, the
candles had guttered out, and the light from the moon bathed them in its soft glow, making his
lover’s skin look silvery.

Without thinking much, he woke Evelyn and Alistair, his hands running over their bodies, desperate
to join with them again. They didn’t protest the rude awakening, kissing him, touching him with as
much urgency as he felt, all of them aware of the merciless passage of time.

They were still tired, moving slowly, their hands roaming languidly, tangling, until it wasn’t clear
who was touching who. Once they were done, they fell asleep again, pressed together as close as
possible.

It was Evelyn who woke them the next time, just as the sun was rising over the horizon, whispering
into their ears words of love and desire, and they came together once more.

The third time they awoke, it was very bright, the day having already started. There was no time for
anything but quick kisses as they dressed. They were leaving that day, and they’ve already overslept
any reasonably timed breakfast. It was a blessing no servant came to knock on their doors.

They were supposed to travel together for some time, before Alistair went his way, and Cullen and Evelyn went theirs, but the road was no place for any real displays of affection.

Evelyn stood with them by the doors, holding their hands, before they had to walk out to their rooms.

“Whatever happens, we’ll be together again,” she said, and Cullen trusted in the fierceness of her voice, her unshaken certainty.

Cullen and Alistair nodded, smiling at her, before they left.

When they met for a meal before the road, Cullen felt like he couldn’t stop looking at them, making sure that they were real, that what happened was real. It felt impossible, but each smile they returned, each quick touch under the table reassured him that he was not dreaming.

When at last they had to say goodbye at a fork in the road which would lead them in two different direction, Alistair, ignoring all ceremony, embraced them. It was quick, and hopefully looked entirely friendly, but Cullen knew that neither of them could go without that final touch.

Back on their horses, Cullen and Evelyn looked on at Alistair’s retreating figure.

“The only thing that makes his departure bearable, is the fact that you’re going to be with me, missing him just as I’ll be missing him,” Evelyn whispered in a slightly broken voice.

“It’s not forever. And in the meantime, I’ll try and make sure that you won’t be too lonely. That’s what Alistair told me to do,” Cullen informed her, smiling at the memory of the king whispering some very specific instructions to him.

“That’s funny, he said the same thing to me,” Evelyn announced, her sad expression turning brighter.

“We won’t let him down, will we?”

“We’ll never let him down.”

For a moment it was almost like Alistair was still there with them, and everything was alright.

Chapter End Notes

Those past three chapters have been crazy for me. First threesome, first double penetration, first anal. I'm seriously stretching my smut writing muscle. I hope it's all right for a first time.

I'm not sure if I haven't complained about it before, but it bares repeating - I desperately need the DA writers to say if 'clitoris' would be an appropriate word to use in Thedas. It feels a bit anachronistic, but this is fantasy, so who knows. Still, I avoid it, and it's so hard you guys.

As I've said a million times before (9 in this story, but who doesn't like a good exaggeration?) - I would very much appreciate comments and kudos.
The interlude

Chapter Notes

So, this is not the next chapter yet, sorry. This is kind of an interlude. It doesn't fit in the previous chapter or the next one, but I liked it enough that I decided to post it. I promised Dorian and Bull's reactions to the whole situation, and their talks with Cullen, and this is that. I hope this will tide you lovely people over for a bit, because I'm afraid I won't be posting on Sunday. I'm in the throws of my final finals (my last semester at university - I'm kind of freaking out about that), so I have less time to edit/write. The next chapter should be up in the middle of next week. Thanks for your patience.

“Soooo…” Dorian’s voice drifted to Evelyn as if through a fog.

“So?” she questioned, not even looking at him, her stare fixed on the two men riding ahead of them, their horses drawn close as they spoke in hushed voices. From time to time one of them would glance back at her, a secretive smile on his face, and Evelyn’s heart would flutter at the sight.

“So, how did it go?” Evelyn could practically hear the eye roll in Dorian’s voice. She had to admit - the question was rather obvious.

“How do you think it went?” she turned the question on her friend, looking at him.

“You three playing footsie under the table at ‘breakfast’,” the mage made air quotes around the word, making sure she knew what he thought about breakfasts after noon, “made me think that something happened.”

“Well, something did happen, and then another thing happen, and another, and another…” she went on, grinning.

“That’s a lot of things happening. And did quality match quantity?”

“Quality?” She felt her grin widening. “Do words like ‘transcendental’ or ‘mind blowing’ mean anything to you?”

Dorian just whistled appreciatively. Alistair and Cullen turned to look back, curious expressions on their faces.

“Good job you two,” Dorian called out to them.

Cullen’s face morphed through several horrified expressions, his cheeks turning a violent red.

“You have no idea how good.” Alistair was a picture of shameless smugness.

“You… How… This…” Cullen apparently couldn’t form a full sentence, which made Evelyn feel a bit sorry for him.

“Did you really think that my well timed confession was just a fortuitous accident?” Dorian questioned, looking at Cullen skeptically.
“I… I… Maker’s breath.” Cullen sighed dramatically.

“What do you say?” Dorian prompted.

“Thank you, Dorian,” Alistair and Evelyn answered in unison.

Dorian kept staring at Cullen who looked to the heavens before muttering “Thank you, Dorian”, and turning to look ahead again.

Alistair started saying something to him, which Evelyn couldn’t hear, and patted his shoulder. After a moment Cullen laughed, and Evelyn felt better knowing that he would get over the whole situation.

“You should see the way you look at them. You are so in love,” Dorian told her.

“I’m getting everything I never knew I needed. This is a new level of happiness.” Evelyn’s smile quickly turned into a small frown. “Maybe not everything. I wish we could stay together permanently, I wish Alistair wouldn’t have to leave us.”

“I know. But believe me, it will work itself out.”

“Do you really think so?”

“With all that blight stopping and word saving antics, I believe that between the three of you, you’ve earned yourselves a happy ending,” Dorian assured her, his voice full of confidence.

“What, you think that the Maker is looking down on us from the Gold City, giving us thumbs up as we have sex?”

“Don’t be crass.” Dorian laughed despite his words. “I think the Maker would want his Bride’s herald to be happy.”

“You know I don’t really believe I’m the Herald of Andraste.”

“Even if you aren’t, I’m sure she’d still like to thank you for what you did.”

Evelyn didn’t feel like arguing theology, especially as it related to her love life, so she stayed silent.

“Now can I tell Bull all about what happened?” Dorian asked her. “He tried to get it out of me, but I valiantly resisted.”

“Impressive.” Evelyn winked at him. “You sure can. I promised him he’d find out, and I always keep my promises.”

“He’ll have a field day with this,” Dorian said, smirking.

Evelyn worried for a second what the mercenary was going to do once he knew the truth, but decided to deal with the situation as it developed.

“Cullen! Congratulations!” Bull’s voice boomed loudly over the ramparts, as he strode towards them, making Cullen stiffen at Evelyn’s side.

“Maker,” Cullen breathed out, new depths of despair and resignation clear in his voice.
“I would’ve never guessed. I thought I knew what people wanted, but man, you surprised me,” the mercenary went on undeterred.

“I should’ve anticipated that if Dorian knew, you’d know soon enough,” Cullen muttered.

“I’m so proud of you.” Bull clasped Cullen's shoulder hard, making him shift uneasily. “And you, Evelyn, good on you. I’ve been telling Dorian for the longest time that we need to get you laid.”

“What?” Now it was Evelyn’s turn to splutter indignantly, which made Cullen laugh.

“But it all worked itself out perfectly. You got yourself not one, but two men. I’m impressed.”

“Umm, thanks, Bull,” Evelyn murmured, looking around nervously to see if there was anyone in hearing range.

“The king and the Inquisitor - you’re doing fine for yourself, Cullen. You must treat them right.”

Cullen just groaned, hanging his head in mortification.

“He is, don’t you worry about that,” Evelyn assured, hoping to end the conversation quickly.

“There are so many possibilities with three people. You should explore all of them. What did you do in Orlais? Do you need some suggestions for next time? Cause believe me, I have plenty of suggestions,” Bullen kept talking, sounding like an excite teacher, eager to share his knowledge and experience with pupils who thus far have been rather delinquent.

“Thank you, but I think we’ll manage on our own. We have plenty of creativity,” Evelyn informed him, glancing at Cullen out of the corner of her eye, watching him rub his hand over his face, like he was trying to remove the blush that was covering his cheeks.

Bull looked like he wasn’t entirely convinced, but Evelyn stared at him pointedly, then indicated Cullen with a subtle tilt of her head.

“Oh, right. I’m sure you’ll work it all out,” Bull said, apparently taking the hint and deciding not to torment Cullen further. “But again, I’m glad for you. I didn’t know you had it in you, Cullen.”

All three of them stood still for a while in silence as the words sunk in, until the moment was broken when Bull started roaring with laughter.

“Did you? Have it in you?” the qunari asked between bouts of laughter.

Evelyn tried to stop herself, but she giggled at the joke.

“Am I being punished for something?” Cullen asked of no one in particular, before cringing at his own choice of words.

Bull’s joy redoubled at Cullen’s turn of phrase.

“I’m more and more impressed with you,” the mercenary commented with a huge grin. “I didn’t think that’d be your thing. But I was wrong before so…”

“No! I’m… Maker’s breath…” Cullen buried his face in his hands.

“I'll stop now,” Bull announce magnanimously. “I think the Commander is in need of some consolation,” he added, smirking at Evelyn.
“Oh, I’ll console him,” Evelyn assured with a smirk of her own.

“Can this conversation end? Please?” Cullen muttered from between his hands.

“I’ll be on my way,” Bull said. “Have fun.”

The qunari passed them by with a last parting pat to Cullen’s shoulder.

“Dorian was bad enough, but this…” Cullen sighed, uncovering his face.

“He’s just happy. Let him have it.”

Cullen smiled dangerously at her words.

“He can have it, as long as I get to have you.”

“Always.”

Cullen’s hand pressed to the small of her back, and then travelled to her hip, squeezing possessively, making her skin tingle in anticipation. Evelyn felt herself shivering and moving closer to Cullen, which made him smile, his scar adding a roguish quality to his expression.

Evelyn was more than happy to pay any penance if it meant seeing him smile like that.
Evelyn was pacing back and forth through her chamber, stroking her fingers over the royal seal on the letter she held in her hand. She desperately wanted to open it, to know what Alistair wrote, to enjoy that small connection they still had, but she had to wait for Cullen.

They have agreed that they would only ever read those letters together. They were meant for them both, and there was something special in sharing that. Also, Alistair’s handwriting was near illegible. His official correspondence was penned by his scribe, and always looked meticulous, but the king had to write his private letters himself, and the results were what Evelyn dubbed the death of calligraphy. She could decipher every third or fourth word, but Cullen found it much easier. It was possibly because he himself had a terrible chicken scratch which everyone in the Inquisition bemoaned. In the end Cullen was the one reading Alistair’s letters out loud to Evelyn, his voice making the experience even more enjoyable, and in turn she wrote the responses which they constructed together.

Letters were not a perfect way of communicating. They could never write exactly what was on their minds, afraid of the letters falling into the wrong hands, and causing a scandal. They used the most vague of euphemisms, and restrained themselves when they wanted to speak of their feelings, of the pain the separation was causing them. Phrases like “we are looking forward to our next meeting” or “we wish you could see this” were pale imitations of what they wanted to tell him - “we miss you every day”, “we wish we could have you here with us”.

When it wasn’t heartbreaking, it was kind of an exciting challenge to try and find the right words to write something dirty that would sound innocent on the surface. Alistair might have won that battle when he wrote “I find myself thinking about the night of our dragon hunt often, and it always brings me great joy”. After hearing that, Evelyn made a lewd gesture with her hand, and enjoyed the way Cullen blushed. When they were done with the letter, she proceeded to whisper to him about what the king was doing and what he was thinking about, which ended with the two of them in bed.

At times one of them would feel guilty that they could enjoy that closeness, while Alistair was alone, but then the other was quick to remind them that it was what their lover wanted for them. He was almost constantly on their mind. They spoke of him often when they were together, imagining him there with them, making up scenarios for when they were back together, pretending that he was watching them.

Despite the fact that they were missing Alistair, when they came together it was always incredible. After they reached Skyhold, Evelyn was a bit worried that it was going to be strange for the two of them, and was very glad to find that it wasn’t. Their encounter in Orlais seemed to have switch something on in Cullen. He was truly happy now, free and at peace with himself, and that meant that he was not shy or nervous around Evelyn, didn’t try to push her away, but instead was affectionate and eager to initiate things.

She was used to him being careful and uncertain, so his assertiveness and dominance were a pleasant surprise each time. While Alistair liked being told what to do, contented to follow while someone else lead, Cullen was almost always in control, taking the initiative. Evelyn enjoyed being with both of them, and could as easily take charge as submit. That, among innumerable other things, was what made them all so well suited for each other, she decided.
Evelyn smiled at the thought, stopping her impatient pacing. The letter felt heavy in her hand, as if weighted down by all the words she was so eager to read. Where was Cullen? He usually came on time, and even if he were late, she never complained - she knew of all his duties, and could not hold his professionalism against him. She herself had been late a time or two. But this time she needed him to be there as soon as possible. If he knew of Alistair’s letter he would surely rush over to read it to her.

They almost always met during the day, in her chambers or in his loft, making up excuses to see each other - a letter that got misplaced, a strategic discussion, a game of chess. It looked much less suspicious when they were together while it was still light outside. There was no sneaking around at night, no impropriety. They could not afford that. Their unique situation had to be handled with care. That meant that Evelyn and Cullen spend their nights alone, which she always regretted. She’s always loved the feeling of another person pressed to her in sleep - it made her feel safe and warm. She’s never been happier than when they all fell asleep together in a heavy tangle of limbs that night in Orlais.

But she shouldn’t complain. She was in love and she was happy, and everything else was just a minor inconvenience.

Well, not exactly minor - the future was very uncertain. There were no blueprints for navigating that kind of relationship, especially considering all of their positions. If they were just three random people, they could buy a farm deep in the countryside, away from prying eyes or live as adventure seekers, traveling the world. They could’ve been just themselves, free and together.

She wanted to slap herself for thinking those things. They were no ordinary people, and their options were limited. She should not indulge in unrealistic fantasies. And she should not think too much of the distant future - it would only make her sad or fearful. They all needed to take it one day at a time, grab all the happiness they could.

As if summoned to distract her from those thoughts, there was the heavy sound of the doors falling open, and then being closed again, heralding Cullen’s arrival. She could hear him taking two steps at a time, trying to get to her as quickly as he could, and it brought another smile to her face.

“I’m really sorry, love,” Cullen called out, making her heart skip a beat. He called her that so often that she should’ve been used to it, but every time felt like the first one. He loved her, and that tangible proof always made her incredibly happy. “I had a meeting with the quartermaster, and it stretched out beyond anything I could’ve anticipated. There was a big confusion about...”

He was at the top of the stairs, and saw the letter in Evelyn’s hand, which caused him to stop talking. He grinned, and practically ran up to her.

“It’s been far too long,” he said, his hand wrapping around hers over the parchment.

That was another problem. They could never write as often as they wished to. Everyone knew that they’d become friends, but if they exchanged too many letters people might get suspicious. Waiting out the appropriate amount of days was pure torture.

“What are you waiting for then?” Evelyn asked.

Cullen took the letter from her and broke the seal. He straightened out the parchment as they settled down on the edge of the bed, their thighs pressed together, constantly seeking out contact.

Evelyn watched Cullen run his eyes over the letter quickly, and saw surprise and then pure joy reflected on his features.
“What does it say?” she questioned impatiently, feeling her heart start to beat faster.

Cullen shot her a broad grin, and cleared his throat.

“‘Dear Evelyn and Cullen,’” he begun. “‘I hope this letter finds you both in good health. I wish I could have written sooner. I know you wait impatiently to hear about my entrancing royal audiences and the fascinating documents I have to write. The life of a king is nothing if not thrilling.’”

Both Evelyn and Cullen laughed at that.

“I know the two of you have to work hard as well (and I do hope you’re taking breaks to enjoy yourselves),” Cullen added a special inflexion to the last words, conveying clearly what the king meant, “‘but at least you can hope for some demon fights or maybe an encounter with some brigands to spice things up. Watch me whine again. But you know, I’ve warned you, so you can’t be shocked. I know it’s a letter so I could just start over with no whining, but where would be the fun in that? And speaking of fun, I was busy not only with my usual kingly duties, but also with planning something special - the very first Denerim masked ball.’”

Evelyn’s breath caught in her throat as she waited for the next words.

“‘It would be my privilege if you were to be my guests of honor,’” Cullen read out, his lips stretched in a huge grin.

Evelyn clapped her hands, feeling like a child who woke up on a Satinalia morning to find that she got the biggest, shiniest gift.

“We’re going to see him,” she said, still not quite believing it.

“Yes, we are.”

They looked at each other for a moment, before Evelyn threw her arms around Cullen.

“I’m so happy,” she whispered.

“Me too. Me too,” Cullen responded, holding her tightly. “Would you like me to continue with the letter?”

“Very much.”

Evelyn let go of him, excited to hear what else Alistair wanted to tell them. She was kind of impressed that he managed to write a few sentences before dropping that news on them.

“‘You have shown me such incredible hospitality, and entertained me so thoroughly, that I’d like to return the favor.’”

Evelyn sighed at the words. Alistair managed another sneaky reference to their carnal activities, and she was already thinking of what he could have planned.

Cullen shot her a quick smirk before getting back to reading.

“‘Neither of you has ever been to Denerim, and I would like to give you two a personal tour, to show you all the points of interest. There is plenty to do both in the city and in the castle. I’m sure you’ll find it a most enjoyable experience.’” Cullen stopped for a moment, a light blush on his cheeks. “Is it just me or is he getting dangerously good at this?”

“Maker, yes,” Evelyn agreed.
“I’m glad it’s not just me.” Cullen laughed, before returning to the task at hand. “Most of the guests will be there just for the ball, but I hope I could persuade you to remain for at least a fortnight. I have remained with you for far longer, and now I believe it’s my turn to play the host.”

“Fourteen days,” Evelyn breathed out. “Do you know how much we could do in fourteen days?”

It was true that Alistair was with them for long weeks, but back then they were still moving cautiously, not able to do everything they wished. Now they were all on the same page, and two weeks held immense possibilities.

“At least fourteen days. That’s what he wrote. Do you think we could make a month out of it?” Cullen asked, his voice hopeful.

“I don’t see why not.” Evelyn grinned at him. She wanted to kiss him in that moment, but restrained herself. If she did, she wouldn’t be able to stop at just one kiss, and she wanted to get to the end of the letter first.

“With all the things I’d like to do, I’m not sure a fortnight would be enough, but we could try to squeeze it all in.” Cullen snorted after reading the words, shaking his head. “I have to admit that instead of listening to people talking about flower arrangements and music, I was instead planning more personal entertainment. Of course, I’m sure you must have heard something about Denerim, and have your own ideas as to what you’d like to do there. I’d be glad to accommodate any of your wishes. A good host always makes sure his guests are happy, after all.” Honestly, if he didn’t have to censor himself those letters would be pure pornography,” Cullen observed.

“He’d give Varric a run for his money,” Evelyn agreed. “I’m kind of disappointed he can’t truly express himself.”

“Me too. But just imagine what will happen when he finally sees us. When he starts making up for lost time and saying everything he couldn’t before, we’ll be lost.” Cullen grinned at her.

“We’ll have to step up our game then. Can’t have him winning.”

“I think that between the three of us there are no losers - we all win. But now let’s finish this.” He turned back to the letter. “Someone (Eamon) is trying to look over my shoulder and keeps telling me to hurry up if I want to send this letter with the latest batch of diplomatic correspondence. I think his intentions are not entirely altruistic. He needs me to entertain someone. I can’t recall who, but I’m sure a lovely time will be had by all. But I do have to finish, no matter how I would wish to continue. I’m looking forward to your enthusiastic response to my invitation, and even more so to seeing you in the flesh. Remember to bring costumes and masks. I’m sure Leliana will be more than happy to help you in that department. Impatiently yours, Alistair.”

“Well, he’s not the only impatient one. I wish we could see him right now. This waiting is going to be unbearable.” Evelyn sighed dramatically.

“We’ve already waited so long, and now we have a date, we can count down the days until we’re reunited with him. And in the meantime…” Cullen drifted off, his hand going to Evelyn’s thigh, “...we can make plans of our own, figure out which wishes we’d like fulfilled while there.”

“I love it when you mix strategic planning with sex.” Evelyn laughed, moving to straddle him. When she pressed herself fully to him she felt his erection, and they both groaned. “Alistair will be so pleased to know that his letters make you hard.”

“Don’t get all smug on me now. I know that I’ll find you wet and ready for me,” Cullen retorted,
grabbing the hem of her dress and pulling it up roughly.

The sight of her in only her stockings always made him stop and stare appreciatively, and this time was no exception. They never had as much time as they would want, and at one point, after a pair of underwear she particularly liked got destroyed, Evelyn decided that divesting herself of her smalls before meeting Cullen would save them a lot of time. The first time she did that his reaction was near overwhelming as he groaned and dropped to his knees before her, and set to rewarding her for her wise decision.

People commented on the fact that she hardly ever wore pants anymore, and she always mumbled something about fashion, but the truth was that pants were inconvenient. A dress could be easily lifted up, and wouldn’t restrict her movements. A dress meant Cullen could hold her up against a wall, with her legs wrapped around his waist. A dress meant that he could push her on his desk and fuck her quickly, his hand on her mouth to prevent her from making too much noise and alerting the guards outside. A dress meant that just like in that very moment she could sit astride him, prepared to ride his cock.

A calloused hand found its way between her legs, and Evelyn moaned shamelessly at the contact. Cullen smirked at her, and Evelyn shrugged.

“Let’s say the king will be pleased about both of our reactions to his words,” she said, her fingers going to the laces of his breeches.

“He’s prepared this huge ball just to have an excuse to see us. We’ll have to make sure he knows how much we appreciate it,” Cullen said, his clever fingers almost managing to distract Evelyn from her task.

“Any particular ideas?” she asked, quickly pulling out his cock and stroking it insistently.

“A few dozen.” He tried to laugh, but it turned into a groan as she lifted up her hips and positioned herself so that the tip of his cock was just barely touching her entrance.

“Be more specific,” she demanded, one hand squeezing the base of his erection, and the other holding on to his shoulder for support.

Cullen’s hand grasped her hip tightly, making her sink down a bit, but she resisted, wanting to force him to say what she wanted to hear. They both enjoyed those moments of fighting for control, the battle of wills. Inevitably it was Evelyn who almost always gave in, but this time she knew she could win.

“Tell me what you want,” she urged, not allowing more than the tip of his cock to push inside of her. For a second it looked like he was about to resist, but then something shifted on his face.

“I want to truly share you with Alistair.” His hand, still wet with her arousal traveled to her arse, one slick finger circling her other entrance. “I want to fuck you here, as Alistair fucks your cunt. I want to feel him next to me, inside you.”

Evelyn moaned at his words, giving in completely, sliding down his cock until he was fully seated within her.

“You like that idea, don’t you,” he murmured.

It wasn’t a question. He knew. But still she nodded her agreement, not trusting her voice. Soon a finger was breaching her, and she trembled. It felt strange, but far from unpleasant. How odd that
they haven’t tried that before.

She started moving her hips, and that finger inside of her also moved, slowly and gently.

“You’ll be so full,” Cullen murmured. “We’ll have all of you. Every part.”

“I’m yours, all yours. Whatever you’ll want, however you’ll want me.” She was babbling, she knew, feeling wanton and loving it. She was moving faster and faster over his cock, touching herself, chasing her pleasure.

“And what do you want?” Cullen asked her suddenly.

Forcing her eyes open, she looked at him, at his lips parted in a dangerous smile. Without a thought, she moved her hand from between her legs and pressed two fingers against his lips.

“I want to see you sucking his cock,” she said.

The words surprised her. It was not that she’s never imagined that before, quite the contrary, but she’s never thought to tell him that. She didn’t want to pressure him, to make him do something he wasn’t comfortable with, and she wasn’t sure how he felt about performing that act. She froze for a second, worrying what he’d do, but to her swift relief, he opened his mouth, allowing her to push her fingers in, and started to suck on them.

“You’ve thought about it before, haven’t you?” Evelyn demanded, her voice breathy, and felt his tongue wrapping around her fingers. “You’ve wondered how it will feel to have Alistair’s cock in your mouth, you imagined how he’d react when he’d understand your intentions, how he’ll look, how he’ll sound, how he’ll taste.”

She was slowly thrusting her fingers in his mouth, entranced by her own words, by the way he responded to them, to the way he bucked up into her. She was so close, but her hands were busy, and she’d be damned before she stop what she was doing.

Luckily she didn’t have to. Cullen knew what she needed, moving his hand from her hip, finding the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex and circling it rapidly.

“Maker, we’ll make him so happy. He’ll fuck me and you’ll suck his cock. And we’ll be able to do it over and over again,” Evelyn murmured.

Cullen made a strangled groan around her fingers, and pushed into her hard. He was rubbing against that perfect spot inside of her, and both his hands were working insistently, and at last it was too much. She threw back her head and moaned as pleasure crashed through her. She felt Cullen spilling inside of her a moment later.

When she was spent, she found herself squeezed against Cullen’s chest, his arms around her back. She nuzzled against his neck, and laughed.

“You know, we haven’t even kissed,” she observed.

“We talk far too much.”

Cullen tilted his head, seeking her mouth. Their lips met at last in a lazy kiss. There was no urgent need in the gesture, only tender affection. They remained like that for long moments, then broke apart at the same time, perfectly in sync.

“Time to get back to work?” Evelyn asked.
“I do believe that we’ve exceeded the appropriate time for discussing guard rotations,” Cullen agreed, disentangling his arms.

Evelyn got up and moved to her vanity where a bowl of water waited for her. She threw a towel at Cullen, who caught it deftly. This routine of cleaning up and redressing was natural to them both after all the time they’ve been together.

“I had other plans for the afternoon, but I think it will be alright if I visit Leliana and discuss the costumes with her,” Evelyn said, quickly washing herself.

“Please, don’t make me look stupid.”

“Psh, nothing could make you look stupid,” Evelyn responded. She truly did not believe that any clothes could ruin the perfection that was Cullen’s appearance.

“You would say that.”

Evelyn strode to him and kissed the top of his head.

“To me you’ll look dashing in just about anything, but I will reign in any crazy ideas Leliana might have. No flashy colors, no sequins or feathers - that’s a promise.”

“Thank you.” Cullen pressed his mouth to her hand. “You’ll tell me all about what you decided on during supper.” He got up from the bed. “You know how I feel about dancing and balls, but I could not be more excited.”

“Me too.” Evelyn smiled at him. “I think you’d be excited to go to the Winter Palace if it meant seeing Alistair.”

“His presence outweights hundreds of Orleans.”

“That is the most Ferelden compliment imaginable. If he weren’t in love with you already he’d fall for you after hearing something like that.”

They both laughed.

“I’m so happy just thinking about seeing him again, I’m not sure what will happen when he’ll actually be there in the flesh, in front of us,” Cullen mused.

“I do hope we’ll be able to restrain ourselves and not tackle him to the ground. At least not in public.”

They exchanged a look. It was truly going to be a challenge.

Chapter End Notes

It's a real disappointment to me that it wouldn't make sense for Alistair to write dirty letters, since that's one of my favorite things ever. It's also kind of amusing to imagine some Orlesian spy getting his or her hands on an explicit letter Alistair wrote, and being blown away by the fact that the seemingly conventional and straight-laced king of Ferelden has two lovers, one of whom is male, and holly shit, he can write smut like it's nobody's business. And then the letter would be made public and the Randy Dowager
would write a review for it. I'm stopping now, because that turn of events would completely derail my plot, but it's an interesting idea, I think.

Next chapter we're heading to Denerim, and will remain there for some time. I have Ideas.

Comments and kudos keep me going.
Alistair tried not to fidget as he stood on the terrace before the main doors to the palace. He felt an urge to go up on his toes like an overeager child, in an attempt to see more, even if the gates were blocking his view. He was buzzing with restless energy, unable to contain his joy. They were coming, after all this time. He was finally going to see them again, touch them again, feel them close to him.

He wasn’t sure when exactly they’d arrive, so he’d been standing there, gripping the railing for close to an hour. He couldn’t remain in his chambers. He’d walk a hole in the carpet with his impatient pacing if he stayed cooped up there.

Eamon thought he was being ridiculous, and maybe he was right. In the morning, after the night during which Alistair hardly slept, he tried on several jackets, preening in the mirror, wanting to look perfect. He never did that. He always just threw on whatever the servants left out for him, but this time he cared, he cared so much. It didn’t matter, he knew - they’d love him in whatever he wore, but still he wanted to make an effort.

A sound made him stiffen. At first he wasn’t quite sure, but then he knew he heard it – the sound of hooves hitting the cobblestones, louder and louder, coming closer and closer, beating at the same speed as his heart. Finally the gates swung open and there they were – Evelyn and Cullen, at the forefront of their party. The sun was reflecting of their hair and the glinting metal on their riding clothes, but the most radiant thing about them were their smiles as they looked up at him.

Alistair couldn’t help himself, he didn’t stand poised waiting for them to ascend the stairs and greet him - instead he was all but running down to meet them. For their part they were dismounting quickly, throwing the reins to the servants, and moving towards him. In the end they met near the bottom of the stairs, colliding together, their arms thrown against each other in a strange tangle.

“I missed you,” they all kept repeating, arms tightening, hands patting against backs.

They should part, Alistair knew, but he couldn’t bring himself to let go. He tried to make up for all the months of longing with that one gesture, even if he knew it would never be enough.

It was Cullen who had the presence of mind to gently extricate himself from their arms. They broke apart, still standing close, grinning at each other.

“Alistair tried not to laugh, and failed miserably.

“Lady Inquisitor, Commander.” He bowed to both of them in turn, his words distorted by his laugh. “I don’t think any amount of courtly gestures will make up for our very indecorous hug,” he added.

“Do you regret that?” Cullen asked, as always worried.

“How could I?” Alistair leaned in close. “If I could I would’ve tackled you two to the ground and kissed you until you couldn’t breathe,” he whispered.
Evelyn sighed.

“You’re most cruel, Your Highness, teasing us with things we can’t have,” she said.

“In just a few hours we’ll be able to do all we want,” Alistair informed them, proud of his plan and excited.

“But in a few hours the ball will start. What do you have planned?” Cullen questioned, his brow rising.

“It’s a surprise.” Alistair grinned. Evelyn opened her mouth, but Alistair just shook his head. “I’m not telling you anything. You’ll have to wait and see. Just like I had to wait in Orlais. And you have that advantage over me that you can be certain that we will come together in more ways than one.”

“That’s good.” Cullen flashed him a smirk. “Because we have such plans for you.”

“We’ve made them as soon as we read your letter,” Evelyn added.

Alistair felt heat coil in the pit of his stomach. He thought he was going to be the one making them curious as to what was going to transpire, but they’ve turned the game on him. He was lost in the thoughts of the three of them together, performing one carnal act after another. Which one did they have in mind? They did have a month – they could do so much!

“You’re thinking about it now, aren’t you?” Cullen’s husky voice drifted to him. “All the things we’ll do to you, all the things you’ll do to us.”

Alistair wanted to say something back, something witty yet sexy, but as it so often happened, Eamon interrupted him.

“Wouldn’t our guest wish to refresh before dinner?” his adviser demanded, his eyes drilling into Alistair, telling him without words that he was failing as a host.

“We’re perfectly fine,” Evelyn answered, a bit sharply, and Alistair appreciated the way she wanted to protect him from Eamon.

“I’m glad you say that, but I believe you do need to go settle in your rooms,” Alistair said, wanting to maintain peace. “If you’d follow me.”

With that he moved up the stairs to the palace. He’d lived there for more than eleven years, and he did not pay any mind to his surrounding anymore, but now he wondered what impressions it was going to make on his guests. Would they enjoy being there? Again, rationally he knew that it did not matter, that they were here for him, and not for the trappings of wealth, but he wanted them to like his home.

Inside, the servants were busy with last minute preparations. There were large flower vases and long tables being placed around, and the innumerable suits of armor were being frantically polished to an almost blinding shine. There was a bit of chaos, and he momentarily worried that he looked like a bad, disorganized host.

“Uh, welcome to my humble abode,” he said, standing in the entrance hall.

“I’d be more interested in your humble royal bedroom,” Evelyn told him in a low voice.

“And the humble royal bed,” Cullen added.
Alistair couldn’t help laughing. They didn’t care about the fact that the whole castle was in a state of disarray, they didn’t care that there was a cold draft, they didn’t care that they were standing next to a terrible cross-eyed taxidermy bear one of his ancestors killed ages ago. They only cared about him, and that realization made him feel better.

“Later,” he promised. “For now let’s get you two settled.”

They both nodded, probably aware that with so many other people around it would not be wise to continue standing around and talking of beds.

“I’ll give you the grand tour tomorrow,” Alistair informed them, moving to the large staircase on the left.

“With all the points of interest?” Cullen asked, quoting his letter, his voice suggestive.

“Each and every one.” Alistair grinned at him. It was still amazing to see this side of Cullen, this free, unafraid, flirty side of him.

“I’d be very interested in seeing the throne room,” Evelyn announced.

“Well, it’s downstairs, right in front of…” Alistair stopped himself. “Wait. You mean see as in use to perform lewd and unroyal acts in. Wicked woman.”

He stopped at the top of the stairs and tried to adopt a stern expression as he looked at Evelyn.

“Begging Your Royal Highness's pardon. That was so bad of me.” Evelyn glanced up at him from under lowered lashes, her voice quiet. “I don’t know what came over me. I will do whatever it take to make up for the way I acted. And if Your Royal Highness deems it fit to punish me I shall accept my fate.” She wrung her hands in front of herself and bit her lip, casting her eyes down.

Alistair was frankly speechless. He wondered what to say, but Evelyn suddenly straightened up, her wide-eyed, innocent and contrite expression morphing into a shameless smirk.

“She’s got this routine down pat,” Cullen informed him, sounding kind of proud.

“She’s been practicing that?” Alistair asked, understanding coming to him.

“That I did,” Evelyn answered. “And Cullen has also been practicing, but he’s not stretching himself terribly in his acting in the role of the stern Captain of the Royal Guard.”

“This girl’s behavior is quite unacceptable, Your Highness,” Cullen said, sounding even more serious and commanding than normally. “I do think she’s going to have to work very hard to gain our forgiveness.”

Alistair tried not to grin.

“You’re right, Captain,” he said, putting on his most kingly voice. “But I can see she is repentant and eager to do everything in her power to appease us.”

They all looked at each other, and Alistair was sure he had the same inappropriate smile on his face as Evelyn and Cullen did.

“So, do you like our plan?” Evelyn wanted to know.

“Do I…? Of course!” Alistair couldn’t believe she would question that. He would not think of something like that on his own, but the scenario held a certain appeal.
“I mentioned our throne relate conversation to Cullen and he was very enthusiastic. And creative,” Evelyn informed him, glancing at Cullen with a fond smile.

“And we’ll have time enough to discuss it further when we won’t be out in the open where anyone could hear,” Cullen said, looking around, as if only now remembering where they were.

“Good point.” Evelyn nodded.

“Believe me, I want to have a very in depth discussion of this and all other ideas you might have,” Alistair told them, nonetheless starting to walk again.

It was very lucky that practically all of the servants were downstairs, preparing for the ball. The guest chambers have been readied the previous day, so the three of them were alone.

They moved through a large hall to the guest wing, Alistair’s steps quickening as he realized that when they got to the room they could have a few moments of unrestrained physical contact. The servants would be by to deliver Evelyn and Cullen’s luggage shortly, and then it would be soon time for dinner, but before that they might get a chance to at least kiss.

“This is your room, Cullen.” Alistair pointed to one set of doors near the end of the hall. “Would you like me to show you around? You could join us, Evelyn,” he continued, sounding more formal, for the benefit of anyone who might suddenly walk in on them. Cullen was right. It was reckless to talk the way they did before. He would not be that careless again.

Cullen inclined his head in agreement.

Alistair walked in and closed the doors after Evelyn and Cullen followed him inside.

Before Alistair could say anything, they were upon him, pushing him into the door, almost knocking the breath out of him, Cullen kissing his lips while Evelyn mouthed at his neck. It took Alistair only a second to adjust to the unexpected attack of affection. He kissed Cullen back, and wound his arms around him and Evelyn, moaning happily. Maker, he missed that. He could remain like that for hours, but he knew their time was limited.

“Room. Dinner,” he muttered when Cullen relinquished his lips for a moment.

Any further words were silenced by Evelyn’s kiss. She was pressing against him, and despite thick layers of her riding clothes, he could feel her curves, making his body respond.

“Could you show us the bedroom, Your Highness?” Cullen whispered into his ear, his warm breath making Alistair shiver.

“I don’t think we have the time,” Alistair responded after Evelyn moved away. He was hoping for a kiss, and now he was getting much more than he bargained for.

“We’ll be quick,” Evelyn pleaded. “Just hands.” Alistair felt her and Cullen’s hands moving over his cock, making him gasp.

“We…” Alistair groaned at their actions. “We shouldn’t. Not now.” The words didn’t want to come out of his mouth - it felt unnatural to refuse them, but he had to be a bit reasonable.

“We’ve missed you, missed touching you, missed hearing you, making you come,” Cullen murmured. “Didn’t you miss that?”

Alistair laughed.
“Noooo. Not at all. I’ve been doing so well without you.” His mocking voice turned into a moan as he felt Cullen’s half hard cock rubbing against his hip, and Evelyn’s mouth moving over his jaw.

“You might want to try that again,” Cullen whispered, his lips ghosting against Alistair’s ear, the dangerous rasp in his voice making the king tremble.

“Fiine. I’ve been touching myself in my lonely bed, thinking of you, coming to the conclusion that after being with you I might be ruined for anything else,” he confessed in a strained voice.

“And we’ve been thinking of you,” Cullen told him, starting to work on Alistair’s belt buckle, with Evelyn’s eager assistance. “When I fucked her, I told her to imagine you watching us.”

Alistair moaned and felt Evelyn hum against his throat.

“That’s good, because I was picturing that exact same thing as I was tugging myself raw,” Alistair told them.

His breeches were almost undone, his pulsing cock almost free, when all three of them stilled, hearing footsteps outside. They tried to quiet their breathing, hoping whoever was there was going to walk past.

Of course they had no such luck. Shortly thereafter there was a knock on the doors.

“Commander?” A tentative male voice questioned.

“Yes?” Cullen responded, sounding for all the world like a perfectly composed man, who was definitely not about to engage in any kind of sexual activity.

“We have your luggage,” the servant informed him.

Alistair watched as Cullen took a deep breath, clenched and unclenched his jaw, and stepped away from him, grabbing his and Evelyn’s hand, and lead them to the window on the opposite wall.

“Come in,” Cullen called out to the servants, once the three of them were safely standing with their backs to the doors, and Alistair’s clothes were readjusted.

There was the sound of the doors opening and people filling in.

“Quite the view, Your Majesty,” Evelyn said. “We saw very little of the Palace District on our way here, but it was rather lovely, and from up here it looks just as pleasant.”

Alistair was glad she had the presence of mind to say something, while all he could focus on doing was willing his erection to completely go away.

“I for one would love to see the river up close. I think I can almost see the edge of the water from here,” Cullen said, following Evelyn’s lead, as if all they were doing thus far was discussing the beauty of the city, and not desperately pawing at each other.

“I’ll be glad to show you around as soon as we’ll have the time,” Alistair responded, gathering his wits.

Their moment was gone. They would have to wait till the night to resume what they were just doing. For now he’d have to let them prepare for dinner.

“Shall I walk you to your room, Lady Trevelyan?” Alistair offered, confident that he looked presentable again.
“Yes, thank you, Your Majesty.”

Evelyn grabbed his arm.

“We’ll see you at dinner, Commander,” he told Cullen, before they strolled off, regretfully leaving him behind.

There were already servants all over the corridor as Alistair lead Evelyn to the largest guest chamber. Evelyn’s luggage was already being unpacked as they entered.

“I hope everything will be to your liking,” Alistair told her, looking around the living area, and nervously inspecting it. It was not Orlesian rich, but he liked to think that it was much more comfortable.

“I’m sure it will be.” Evelyn smiled at him, walking to the table where a bowl of her favorite chocolates was placed. She popped one into her mouth, closing her eyes in pleasure.

“Dessert before dinner?” he asked in a teasing tone, glad to see she appreciated the gesture.

“When I want something, I take it.” She grinned at him.

Alistair wished he could show her that he could also take what he wanted, but it just so happened that with so many people milling about he actually could not take her. With a dramatic sigh, he turned to the doors.

“I hope you’ll still have your appetite come dinner time,” he said in parting.

“Don’t worry, Your Majesty. You know me and my appetites,” Evelyn assured him, her double entendre a bit ruined by the fact that she already had another chocolate or two in her mouth.

Alistair just shook his head as he left the chamber.

As he was making his way to his own rooms all he could think was “They’re here, they’re here. Finally.” He almost took the wrong turn a few times, too preoccupied with his joy. He’s spent so much time missing his lovers and planning for their surprise, that it almost felt unreal that they were there, with him.

During some nights he did wonder if their reunion was going to be awkward, if something wasn’t going to be lost after all that time, but what happened was the opposite of those fears. That mad passion was still very real, and their interactions felt as natural as if no time at all has passed.

Once he finally got to his chamber, he guiltily looked at the doors leading to his study, where his desk overflowed with unanswered letters, unread reports and unsigned documents. He’s been slacking off in his duties a bit in the last week, too focused on the ball and his daydreams. There was a bit of time before dinner, and he had to use it responsibly. The next month was not going to be particularly productive, at least as far as ruling was concerned, so he needed to get a bit of work done when he could.

It was all tedious and boring, and Alistair found his thoughts straying constantly, but he managed to make a small dent in the pile of documents before a servant arrived to tell him that dinner was served.

When he reached the dining room his guests were already seated. If it were up to him, he’d have a very intimate dinner with just Evelyn and Cullen, but protocol dictated that he invite some other high ranking nobles who arrived for the ball.
At least he could keep his lovers close by him. As the guest of honor, Evelyn was seated on his right. It was trickier with Cullen - if Alistair were married, the second most important guest would be on his wife’s right, but his marital situation being as it was, there was some debate as to the arrangement. In the end Eamon relented and agreed that sitting Cullen on the king’s left was good enough.

It was moments like this that Alistair missed the simplicity of the blight. Back then he would cook something positively vile, and everyone would gather around the fire with wooden bowls to eat it and complain about it. The good old days.

On the other hand, back then his tent was decidedly lonely, and now he could expect two people to warm his bed. That was an improvement.

As Alistair walked up to the table, everyone got up, a silence falling over them. He gestured for them to sit back down, and took his place. His gaze kept switching between Evelyn and Cullen. Wearing travel worn clothes they were breathtaking, but in more formal attire they all but glowed. As he kept staring, Evelyn caught his eye and with a subtle tilt of her head indicated the plates.

“Oh, right, yes.” Alistair felt very strange, having forgotten about the food. “Let’s eat.”

The servants started placing soup bowls in front of the guests, and conversation begun flowing again. It was so frustrating - there were so many things he wanted to tell Evelyn and Cullen, but even if a large portion of it was not inappropriate, it would still be too revealing for a crowded dining room. Instead he politely asked them about their journey, work, and Dori’s health. That last topic proved particularly fruitful as Cullen sung the praises of his faithful mabari, sounding like a proud father.

At the back of his mind, Alistair heard Eamon’s voice telling him to engage all his guests, but he couldn’t bring himself to do that. Catching up on months of separation was too tempting, and so the courses changed and Alistair still talked only to two people.

It was just before desert that the youngest son of the Bann of Rainesfere managed to catch Cullen’s attention.

“Ser Rutherford, do you have any advice for…” the boy started speaking.

“Is it Ser?” the Arl of West Hills cut in, his tone mocking. “Does one retain the right to use that title after abandoning the Order?”

Alistair felt his hands ball into tight fists at the words. How dare that man try and insult Cullen?

“It’s just Commander now,” Cullen replied curtly, his tone flat.

“Indeed,” Alistair spat out. “Commander. Commander of the armies that defeated Corypheus, saving, well… the entire world, including each and every single one of us gathered here.” He leveled the Arl with his most murderous glare. “So I would suggest that everyone acted in the most grateful and courteous manner to this brave hero.”

The Arl looked taken aback.

“I did not mean anything…” he began explaining himself.

“I’m sure no one would intentionally try and insult my honored guest. What kind of madness would that be?” Alistair said, a fake smile plastered on his face, while his voice dripped with sarcasm.

A profound silence descended on the room, as all the guests shifted in their seats, casting glances at the Arl, and probably thanking their lucky star they didn’t say anything of that nature. It was kind of
satisfying, having the power to put someone down like that with only a few words, but it would’ve been infinitely more so if he could just punch the Arl in the jaw. The man was probably annoyed that he was not receiving the attention he thought was owed him, and acted out by trying to humiliate the person who was usurping the king’s time. It was petty and infuriating, and Alistair would never stand for something like that.

“Oh, a pudding, how marvelous,” the Bann of Dragonmount exclaimed, breaking the tense silence.

“It looks delightful,” someone else commented.

Some semblance of conversation returned as people tasted the pudding and remarked on its excellence.

Alistair couldn’t even tell what he was eating. He was too preoccupied with fuming over the exchange. Cullen appeared deeply uncomfortable, not lifting his eyes from the plate, while Evelyn was glancing worriedly from him to Alistair. He wanted to say something reassuring to her, make a joke, but he couldn’t find the words.

Maddening, snobbish nobles. How he hated them and their games. Technically, he was one himself, but it never felt like it. His entire life, Alistair has been an outsider, not truly belonging anywhere. He was used to being treated less than kindly. When he was a child no one tried to be subtle about it, but once he became the king any deprecating remarks made by some of the bolder nobles or foreign dignitaries were always veiled. It didn’t bother him anymore. Those were just words, words of people who didn’t matter.

What happened with Cullen was different. Alistair could let something go if it concerned him, but when someone attacked the person he loved, he could not stop himself from reacting. Maybe he blew the whole thing out of proportion, maybe he should’ve let it go, allow Cullen to speak for himself. That was what Eamon would urge no doubt, but he was not there, and Alistair had only so much patience.

Titles meant nothing to Alistair. Cullen was worth more than all the nobles combined, and Alistair hoped he knew that.

Another thought occurred to Alistair suddenly. Was this the first time something like that has happened to Cullen or was he used to small people attempting to build themselves up by trying to tear him down? The idea that Cullen might have experienced something like that before infuriated Alistair. Cullen deserved nothing short of reverence, but so many people still cared about social position instead of deeds, seeing themselves as better just because Cullen was not of noble birth and held no titles.

He almost smacked his own head in annoyance at himself. There was an easy fix to that situation within his grasp. How could he have not thought about it before? Maybe it was just the fact that he didn’t think of it as something important. No matter, now it would be done.

There was a hand on his arm, making Alistair jump up slightly.

“Shall we go and change? Everyone’s finished eating,” Evelyn told him in a whisper.

“Yes, of course.” Alistair nodded, getting up.

He’d have to talk to Evelyn about his plan. It would carry certain implications for her, and it would not be fair to her not to ask her opinion. But that was a matter for another day, even if Alistair was impatient to get on with it once the idea was in his head.
“Alistair?” Cullen’s quiet voice made Alistair snap back to the present.

“I’m sorry,” he muttered.

He was standing over the table with Evelyn and Cullen on both his sides, while the rest of the guests were at the doors. The servants were clearing the plates and glasses, moving quickly next to them.

“Will you be alright?” Cullen questioned.

A laugh tore itself out of Alistair’s mouth.

“Me? I should be asking you that question.”

“That was nothing new to me. I’ll live. You took it much harder than I did,” Cullen responded, his tone easy.

Alistair grit his teeth. So, just like he suspected, Cullen was used to that kind of treatment. If Alistair had his way, he would never had that problem again. But for now he’d have to put it out of his mind. The ball was fast approaching, and he couldn’t dampen their mood. If Cullen could look past the incident, then he would not dwell on it either.

“I’ll be fine,” he said. “And even better than fine in a few hours.”

He smirked at Evelyn and Cullen, and noticed how they relaxed at the change in his demeanor.

“I have a lot of preparations to go through,” Evelyn told them, “so I think we should go get ready.”

Alistair nodded his agreement, and with that they left the chamber, separating to go to their rooms.

Chapter End Notes

I'm back. It's been a while. First there was real life, and then I had to see if I could pull of the roleplay I've set up in this chapter. It's a bit different than my usual fair. You'll see what I mean in two or three chapters. I don't know what happened - this thing's taking a life of its own, and what I thought was going to be one chapter will be three. Also, I've looked for floor plans for Denerim palace, but in game we only saw the throne room, so I'm making up the rest.

Enough of my rambling. I hope you're still out there and want to read this story. Comments and kudos as always mean a lot to me.
The masked ball

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

As Alistair carefully put on all the complicated pieces of his costume, he wondered what Evelyn and Cullen were going to wear. They wouldn’t keep the clothes on for very long, but he was still curious. He knew Leliana must have come up with something spectacular for them.

Maker bless Leliana. Without her he wouldn’t be able to do any of the things he had envisioned. It was a bit disconcerting to know that now he owed her, but he couldn’t bring himself to regret that. Some things were worth being indebted to a powerful spy master.

Leliana was also the one who gave him the suggestion for his own costume. A griffon. It was really obvious once she said it, but he would not have came up with it himself. His original idea was something simple, like a bear or a wolf, but Leliana protested against it fervently. Considering all the effort she was putting into the whole endeavor, he couldn’t refuse her, and now looking in the mirror, he was pleased he acquiesced.

He might not have been the most impartial judge, but he thought he looked rather majestic. His breeches were light brown, bringing to mind the griffon’s lion lower half, while his jacket, which represented the eagle upper half, was grey. The cape falling over his shoulders was stitched and embroidered in a way that suggested wings without being too literal. The whole ensemble was completed by a large full face white mask with small ears and a beak, which was fashioned in a way that allowed the wearer to eat and drink.

“Good job, Leliana,” he said out loud, pleased to hear that his voice sounded a bit foreign to his own ears, distorted by the mask. That was another crucial part of the plan.

He was done surprisingly quickly, but he had no desire to stay in his chamber. It would not hurt to go to the ballroom, see if everything was ready, and greet any overeager guests who might have came early.

Once he arrived in the ballroom, he was pleased to notice that everything looked perfect - from the shine of the floor to the elegant flower arrangements. The orchestra was setting up, and the servants with their trays were already standing in strategic places. He also took his post near the entrance.

Alistair didn’t have to wait long before the announcer informed the as of yet empty room of the arrival of a minor knight and his wife, both dressed as some kind of trees. After that the room started filling with an interesting mixture of animals, plants, and mythological, historical and fictional characters. One couple gathered quite a bit of attention, dressed as the guard captain and her templar knight from Varric’s novel. They both sounded beyond excited when Alistair told them that he was going to inform the author of "Swords and shields” about the enthusiasm and creativity of his fans.

The routine of greeting guests was very familiar to Alistair, and he was mostly doing it automatically, without much thought. He snapped back into full attention when Evelyn and Cullen came into view. They both looked spectacular. Not very surprisingly, Cullen was dressed as a lion, all in gold, with a fearsome looking mask. Evelyn was… At first he wasn’t sure, but then it became clear. She was a dragon. But not just any dragon. The Greater Mistral. Her dressed was a shimmering yellow and blue, with a high collar in the shape of wings, and a plunging neckline. There was a subtle glint of sharp teeth around the mouth of her mask. It was almost a shame they’d have to discard those amazing costumes.
Evelyn was announced and approached Alistair first, alone. She and Cullen arrived together, but they took pains not to be perceived as a couple.

“Your Majesty.” Evelyn curtsied, and Alistair responded with a bow. “Your costume is exquisite,” she complimented, moving a bit closer. “I think it will look even better on the floor of your chamber,” she added, and moved away before Alistair could respond. He couldn’t see her face, but he was sure she was smirking. Maker, but he loved that wicked woman.

After he was announced, Cullen strode over to Alistair, looking very much like a predator on the prowl, making Alistair feel as if he were a creature that was about to be devoured. Even that aggressive display couldn’t have prepared Alistair for Cullen’s first words.

“I’m looking forward to sucking your cock later in the evening, Your Majesty,” he whispered to Alistair, after giving a respectful bow.

Alistair’s breath stuttered in his throat, and he couldn’t swallow properly, coughing behind his mask.

“You’re going to make me choke,” he muttered, trying to compose himself, as his mind brought forward a myriad of lewd images of Cullen on his knees, those scared lips parting to take in his cock. His imagined that often, but to know that it was truly going to happen was making his anticipation reach unprecedented heights.

“I do believe it might to be the other way around,” Cullen deadpanned.

Alistair groaned.

“You’re killing me here. I don’t want the lady dowager who’s standing behind you to think I’m sporting an erection because I’m excited to see her.”

Cullen just laughed.

“I’m waiting for your surprise, My Liege. And I believe you’re looking forward to it too,” the Commander said, before striding into the ballroom to join Evelyn, leaving Alistair to his fate.

It was near unbearable, standing at the entrance, greeting all his noble guests, saying something kind and personal to each and every one of them, while his mind was elsewhere. All Alistair wanted to do was put his plan into motion, but he knew that his duties always had to come before he did.

When the last person filed in, he was free to walk around and mingle. Everyone wanted a word with him, and possibly even a dance. He tried to finish every exchange as quickly as he could, while pushing further into the ballroom, his eyes trained on Evelyn and Cullen who were kept as busy as he was. Evelyn was the guest of honor, which meant that he would officially start the ball by dancing with her. It was a good reason to excuse himself from others and seek her out.

When he managed to reach her, he bowed to her and offered her his arm, which she accepted.

“Maker, this was taking forever. I’m starting to question the whole ball idea. Maybe I should’ve just started a war - that would be excuse enough to see you,” Alistair muttered, leading Evelyn over to the dancefloor. He knew they would soon be off to their own private party, but even this amount of time spent playing host to his demanding guests was too much for him.

“I think there will be a bit less bloodshed that way, but I can see your point,” Evelyn agreed as they found themselves in the center of the room. “My second dance is with a ban who must hold a record for the sweatiest hands in Thedas.”
Alistair shuddered at Evelyn’s words before bowing again. They got into the proper stance and waited for the music. When the first notes of a traditional Fereldan song started to play, they begun to move forward.

“At least you’ll get to dance with Cullen. It would not look good if I did that,” Alistair observed. It was truly a shame that he wouldn’t be able to do that.

They parted for a moment and came together again.

“Actually,” Evelyn started to explain, “I won’t be dancing with him either. At the Winter Palace everyone danced with everyone, but he steadfastly refused. I know he was uncomfortable with the Oresian’s unsubtle advances, but that was not the only reason.” They moved apart again, did a turn, and returned to their original position. “He agreed to dance with me only when we were alone on a balcony, after Celene was saved, and it took me quite a bit of persuading to get him to do that.”

Alistair spun her around. “He told me that he was a terrible dancer since he never had any lessons.” They stood back to back, bowed to the other dancers and turned back to each other, moving ahead.

“And how could he have learned? The Templars never had any reason to impart that skill on the recruits. I know he feels self-conscious about it.” They made it to the end of the dancefloor and turned around. “He could learn, but when we fought Corypheus he said that it was a waste of time, and after that he always found a different excuse. I think he’s just afraid of looking undignified in public.”

Alistair spied Cullen at the edge of the room, sipping some wine, barely paying attention to the two young women trying to engage him in conversation. Instead Cullen was following Alistair and Evelyn with his eyes. Did he wish he could be with them out on the dancefloor? It was strange to think that such an accomplished man would be unable to do something.

Alistair was no natural born dancer. He had all the grace of a large man used to hitting large creatures with large swords, but over the long, and frankly torturous, months after his coronation, all the steps to the traditional dances were drilled into his head and feet. His technique lacked finesse, but he did not embarrass himself. And with a partner like Evelyn it became infinitely easier. She glided over the floor, her movements light and effortless. It was clear that it came as easy as breathing to her, and that she enjoyed herself.

They switched places, and Alistair lost sight of Cullen, but he couldn’t stop thinking about his stubborn refusal to learn. Alistair would have to talk to him about it. Evelyn would most definitely enjoy being able to dance with Cullen, and from the slightly forlorn way Cullen looked at them, Alistair guessed that he probably wished he could do that for her.

“You’ve gone awfully quiet,” Evelyn observed after they performed a complicated sequences involving turning and clapping.

“I think I saw the harpy with the cold bony hands. She must be sharpening her claws to dig them into my tender back,” Alistair bluffed.

“I’m offended. I thought I was going to be the only woman digging her claws into your tender back tonight.”

“You can dig your anything into my anything,” he promised.

Soon after that exchange, the song ended. They bowed to each other, and Evelyn’s attention was claimed by the Bann of the wet hands, and Alistair felt the cold embrace of the old lady who was gearing up to tell him for the umpteenth time about her eldest daughter and her many talents.
He never particularly enjoyed dancing, but this evening all the songs seemed longer than they had any right to be, and the company was even more tedious. He kept stealing glances at Evelyn, who was dancing dutifully, and Cullen, who watched them, as if oblivious to a ring of admirers surrounding him.

Knowing what was going to happen later was making the wait feel unbearable. If it was up to Alistair he would’ve run off after greeting the guests. Luckily the timing was not up to him - Leliana gave her spies very particular instructions, and he trusted her judgment.

After the dance with the prospective mother-in-law, Alistair had to take two more turns over the dancefloor before he could beg off and take a break. He was enjoying a glass of wine and halfheartedly listening to a Bann talking about his prized stallion, when a man in a guard’s uniform approached him.

“There is a small matter that requires your attention, Your Majesty,” the man told him.

Alistair grinned behind his mask. That was it. Finally. Not a second to early.

“I do apologize,” he said to the Bann, knowing he sounded anything but. “I do hope I’ll be able to return soon.”

Without waiting for the noble’s answer, Alistair followed the “guard” to a small corridor, and then into a tiny and sparsely lit utility room. His heart was beating quickly, excitement overtaking him. He had an impulse to hug the spy.

“They’re in the next room. When you’ll be done here we’ll make the exchange,” the man informed him, indicating the pile of costumes lying on a table.

Alistair didn’t even get the chance to acknowledge the words before the man was gone. There wasn’t even much room to pace impatiently, and Alistair was left tapping his foot against the floor, praying for everything to go quicker. He could start changing clothes, but then he was sure he’d be caught in some strange position, partially undressed, and he wanted to look dignified when he explained his brilliant plan.

After a small eternity, the doors opened, and Cullen walked into the room.

“Alistair?” he questioned, confused. “What’s going on?”

“It’s killing me, but let’s wait with the answers for Evelyn,” Alistair responded, biting his lip to try and stop himself from speaking.

“We don’t have much time before our absence will be noticed. And as much as I want to spend even that little time with you, I don’t think involving a guard was the best idea.” Cullen’s voice was soft, as if he didn’t wanted to sound too critical.

“He’s no guard,” Alistair told him, laughing at Cullen’s shocked gasp.

“That’s even worse! Who is he then?”

“Everything will be revealed in…” Alistair trailed off at the sound of the doors opening again, admitting Evelyn, “...now.”

“Is this the emergency the guard told me about?” Evelyn asked.

“That it is.” Alistair grinned, and realized that they could not see that expression under the mask. He
took it off, and Evelyn and Cullen followed suit. “Much better.” Hiding those faces was a crime, if a necessary one. He wanted to kiss them, but restrained himself. “Are you ready for the reveal of my masterplan?”

They both nodded, looking at him curiously.

“It’s time for a bit of theatre. We put on those,” he grabbed a piece of costume from the table, “and go on to enjoy a party for a while, before disappearing to my chambers, while three poor saps play us for the night.”

He looked at them, greenly and proudly, and encountered uncertain expressions.

“How did you…” Evelyn started.

“Leliana,” Alistair explained, effectively stopping her.

“You got three of her spies for that?” Cullen wanted to know after a moment of silence.

“Well, four counting that pretend guard, but generally, yes. Come on. I’ve been planning it with her for the longest time. Don’t tell me you don’t like it.” Doubt was creeping into his mind now. Was it completely insane? Would they not feel comfortable with that arrangement?

“This is the best misappropriation of the Inquisition’s resources I could ever imagine.” Evelyn was smiling, and Alistair’s heart felt lighter.

“Quite brilliant, truly,” Cullen added.

“Whooo.” Alistair wiped his brow with an exaggerated motion. “For a moment there you had me worried.”

“It is a very… unique idea. Speaking for myself, I was just surprised,” Cullen told him.

“Me too,” Evelyn agreed. “It’s risky, but if those are going to be Leliana’s people impersonating us, then I trust they will be able to pull it off, and not blab about it later. This explains why you made it a masked ball. I honestly don’t think anyone’s ever had to work so hard to have sex,” she added with a laugh.

“I don’t know about that, but I would not be opposed to you expressing your admiration for my ingenuity and effort,” Alistair responded, smirking at them.

In a flash he was being pushed into the wall for the second time this day, warm bodies pressed against him, soft lips seeking his, and he laughed helplessly at their enthusiasm.

As if in reaction to the sounds, there was a knock on the doors.

“I don’t mean to intrude, Your Majesty, but time is of the essence,” Leliana’s spy called out to him.

Evelyn buried her head against Alistair’s chest, smothering a giggle, while Cullen straightened up, blushing.

“We’re on it!” Alistair responded to the man outside. “Let’s get into those costumes,” he told his lovers.

Cullen, with his relatively simple costume, had the easiest time of it, while Evelyn struggled with the many ties and buttons of her dress. Cullen and Alistair were already dressed in their new clothes, when she only managed to take her elaborate outfit off. Alistair found himself staring at her as she
stood before them in a pearly corset, almost non-existent smalls and see-through stockings.

When his eyes traveled back up her body, he noticed her smirking.

“There’ll be plenty of time for starting later,” she told him. “Now help me dress.”

“But I’ve missed seeing you like this. Seeing you at all,” Alistair complained, nonetheless grabbing the new dress, and together with Cullen pulling it over her head.

Cullen stepped behind her and started adjusting the ties at the back.

“Gotten quite proficient at it, did you?” Alistair asked, and there might have been a tiny bit of jealousy in his words. It was not that he wished Cullen didn’t find the task so easy. He just wanted to also have the opportunity to spend so much time with Evelyn that he’d learn how her dresses worked.

“More often than not we didn’t have enough time to do it properly, so I’d just hike up her skirt, but I did manage to pick up some dress related skills,” Cullen explained, his hands working fast, tightening the ties.

Alistair was momentarily distracted by the idea of Cullen pushing Evelyn against some flat surface, lifting up her skirt, and fucking her quickly.

“Don’t worry - I’ll put you through your paces and by the time we’ll be leaving, you’ll know more about my dresses than my maids do,” Evelyn told Alistair, making him smile.

“I’m looking forward to it,” he responded. “Are we ready then?”

“I’m curious what we’re supposed to be,” Evelyn wondered, glancing at their clothes, all in various shades of white, grey and black.

Cullen lifted up the masks from the table and smiled.

“Leliana thinks we make good birds of prey,” he announced, taking a falcon mask.

Alistair examined his own mask - an eagle, and Evelyn's, which was a striking snow owl.

“Speaking of Leliana - I’m curious as to how your conversation with her went,” Evelyn inquired, securing the mask on her head.

“Would it surprise you to find out that I was a stammering mess while she remained perfectly composed and actually amused by the fact that I thought she would not know?”

Alistair remembered that conversation vividly. Leliana happened to be visiting while on some extremely mysterious quest, and Alistair decided to solicit her help. She said that it was cute that he thought she would be shocked or scandalized.

“That sounds about right.” Evelyn laughed.

“Thank you for going through that for us,” Cullen added, grabbing Alistair’s hand and squeezing affectionately. “Shall we go now?” he asked.

Evelyn lead, and Cullen and Alistair followed her out. Leliana’s man was standing against the wall opposite to the doors, looking alert.

“Should we walk in separately?” Cullen questioned him.
“No, you all went out of the ballroom together,” the spy responded. “The king, Commander and Inquisitor will change now, and return separately in a moment.”

“Thank you,” Evelyn told him.

“For what?” The spy smiled.

Evelyn just nodded at him and headed for the doors. Once they were in the ballroom, she took Alistair and Cullen under the arm.

“It feels so liberating to be wearing a mask - no one knows who I am underneath it,” she said, looking around the room. “I feel like being shocking, flaunting my two lovers.” She giggled. “I’m quite terrible.”

“And we loved you for it,” Cullen reassured.

“I certainly wouldn’t mind being flaunted,” Alistair told them. “Who do you think we are?”

“We had to have been announced as someone,” Cullen responded.

“I think I’m a wealthy lady from the Free Marches who inherited the family fortune and title, and took two of her vassal knights as her lovers, causing a huge scandal,” Evelyn told them, tightening her arms and bringing them closer.

“I like the sound of that,” Alistair declared.

“Does my lady wish to drink something? Sample some pastries? Her wish is our command.” There was humor in Cullen’s voice, even if he tried to sound differential.

“Some wine would be nice, my good Ser,” Evelyn responded.

They started making their way to a table laden with food and drink. Alistair could feel people’s eyes on them. The way they were pressed against each other definitely didn’t look platonic. He wondered what the other guests were thinking about them. Where they shocked, outraged, or maybe jealous? Even with their faces covered they made quite a striking…

“What are we?” Alistair asked when they stopped and disentangled their arms to take a glass each. “We’re not a couple, are we? A couple normally implies two people. Is there a name for us?”

“Happy,” Evelyn responded. “We’re happy. I don’t care for any name.”

“We’re not a pair, but neither are we a group,” Alistair pressed on. “A throuple?” he suggested.

“That sounds awful.” Cullen laughed. “I’m with our lady on this - happy is enough. This is a relationship with no real label, and there’s nothing wrong with that.”

“I guess I could be persuaded to let this linguistic debate go.” Alistair took a sip of his wine, trying to dismiss his useless thoughts.

That was the moment when the “King” came into Alistair’s field of vision. He had to commend Leliana - her spy was exactly Alistair’s height, with almost the same build, and strikingly similar hair.

“The king is such a handsome man,” Evelyn murmured, apparently noticing the spy as well.

“Indeed, he’s incredibly attractive,” Cullen agreed.
“Are you trying to make me jealous?” Alistair demanded playfully.

“Maybe,” Evelyn and Cullen responded, almost in unison, and laughed.

“There goes the Inquisitor - she’s a stunning woman,” Alistair said, noticing Evelyn’s double entering through a different set of doors. The woman was built almost identically to the Inquisitor, but there was something about the way she walked, the ways she carried herself, that was very different. Alistair would never mistake the two. “And the Commander - he’s absolutely magnetic.” The man in Cullen’s clothes, who appeared moments later, was also all but indistinguishable from the original at a casual glance, but Alistair noticed their different postures.

Just after Alistair finished this sentence, there was a gasp near them.

“There! Do you see him? I’d give the horse my papa bought me for one dance with him,” a young girl whispered dramatically to her friend, who nodded thoughtfully, before they both started making their way to who they thought was the Commander.

“Those ladies agree with you. And so do I,” Evelyn said to Alistair.

“And would you pay a price like that for him?” Alistair asked Evelyn.

“Without a second thought.”

“If only he could hear that.” Alistair looked right at Cullen, meeting his eyes, which in the masks was quite the accomplishment.

“I…” Cullen begun.

“Could you not serve as a substitute for the Commander?” Alistair asked. “You did say that our lady's wish is your command, and I do believe she wishes to dance.”

Alistair was expecting more resistance, and was ready to drop the act and just outright tell Cullen that no one knew who they were and even if he didn’t dance well it would not matter, but Cullen did not protest. Instead he just nodded, put down his glass, and bowed before Evelyn, who gasped quietly and accepted his hand.

With a sense of accomplishment, Alistair watched them move to the dancefloor. Maybe anonymity would do Cullen some good, allow him to be more relaxed. As another song started and they began to dance, Alistair noticed that Cullen was a bit stiff, but he didn’t look worse than most other men around him. How could he not see that? How could he be so self-conscious about that? It was probably his damnable perfectionism telling him that if he wasn’t the best dancer in the room he should not dance at all.

Alistair kept sipping his drink and watching Cullen and Evelyn contentedly for some moments, when a lady dressed as a halla sauntered over to him.

“A fine evening,” she murmured in a purposefully husky voice.

“Indeed,” Alistair agreed, focused on watching his lovers dance. Cullen spun Evelyn in place and she finished the move by falling into his arms. She was taking full advantage of the situation. Alistair was glad to see her having so much fun.

“I don’t think I know you, Ser,” the halla-lady continued, undeterred by his apparent lack of interest.

“I’m from the Free Marches,” Alistair responded, going with Evelyn’s story.
In that moment Cullen lifted Evelyn up by the waist and turned with her, setting her down with surprising grace. Alistair felt like clapping his hands, he was so proud of Cullen. It was just nerves that were holding him back before.

“…my cousin said it was quite nice, but I’m not sure about the crossing. I get so terribly seasick, even on pleasure barges,” the woman at his side kept talking. He’s managed to tune out the beginning of her sentence, but she couldn’t have known that.

“Oh,” was all Alistair said in response.

“Look at me talk and talk.” The lady laughed and moved closer to Alistair. “Tell me something about yourself, Ser. I wish to know you.” She put a hand on his arm, and Alistair went still under her touch. He needed to get rid of her.

“There’s not much to know,” he told her, and took a large gulp of his drink.

“I’m sure that’s not true. You look like a warrior, Ser. You must have a lot of stories to tell.” She was running her hands over his arm lightly, and Alistair felt like getting away.

“I’m here to claim my dance,” a deep male voice announced.

Alistair turned in the direction of the voice, and noticed Cullen and Evelyn standing next to him and the overly familiar lady. In his unease Alistair didn’t even notice that the song has ended. He was even more shocked that Cullen was the one offering him a rescue.

“Do go on,” Evelyn encouraged after Alistair remained silent. “I will keep your new friend busy.”

Alistair just nodded and accepted Cullen’s hand, as if in a trance. He knew people were staring at them as they walked to the dancefloor. It was not completely unheard of for two people of the same gender to dance together, but it was rather rare. Times were changing, and Alistair hoped he was propelling that change forward, but still, same sex relationships were a bit of a taboo, especially among the nobility, expected to carry on the family name. Only the bravest souls went public with their feeling, and often were shunned by their more conservative peers.

It was a sad moment, as Alistair realized that this was the only way in which he could ever be open with what he felt for Cullen. The world was not ready for a king who admitted to loving a man. And even if it were, their situation was much more complicated than that.

Those thoughts were only bringing him down and this day that was supposed to be full of nothing but joy. He could not allow himself to dwell on the negatives. He’d have enough time for that when he was alone. For now he’d dance and be merry and make all that he could out of what he was given.

“You’re getting very bold,” he told Cullen, moving to stand before him, their hands joined. “I do appreciate the rescue, but I was surprised.”

“I’ve thought about letting our lady save you, but then I realized what a unique opportunity that was for me. For us.”

The song begun, and they started moving. Cullen was the one to lead, and Alistair scrambled to follow. He was always the one to lead, but this was not an unpleasant change of pace. It was exhilarating to dance with Cullen, to hold his solid hand, to move close to him. Even if for the rest of their lives they’d have to hide, they’d still have this one moment when they were out in the open, free and unafraid, relishing in the scandal they were creating.
“I love you,” he said, loudly, knowing that someone was bound to overhear. He didn’t care. He needed Cullen to hear that in that moment.

“I love you too,” Cullen responded immediately, no hesitation in his voice.

They separated for a beat, and then came together, their chest flush against each other. Their eyes met for a moment, and the look Cullen gave him was something Alistair was never going to forget, no matter how long he managed to live. There was so much unadulterated affection in those amber eyes, so much happiness and hope, it was overwhelming. Suddenly Alistair didn’t feel like dancing. That was enough of public displays for one night. He just wanted to be alone with his lovers, to be able to fully show them how much their love meant to him.

Still, a part of him was disappointed when the song ended. He thought they’d just separate, but Cullen kept a tight hold on his arm as they made their way to Evelyn, who stood alone by a window.

“I think I’ve scared your friend off,” she told Alistair in a cheerful voice.

“Thank the Maker,” he responded.

“I’ve informed her of our arrangement and offered some very useful life advice, which she seemed unreceptive to. Her loss.”

“You were loving every second of that exchange, weren’t you?” Cullen asked, clearly amused.

“That I did.” Evelyn nodded. “You can’t tell, but I’m grinning.”

“Oh, but we can tell,” Alistair countered.

“If you know me so well, then tell me what do I want to do right now?”

Alistair cocked his head to the side, pretending to study her.

“I… I see. I see your desires,” he started in a deep serious voice he’s heard some people pretending to be mind readers use. “An empty chamber, a large bed, a man… no… two men, and you between them.”

“Incredible! That’s exactly what I was thinking about.” Evelyn laughed.

“Your wish is our command,” Alistair responded, moving to link arms with his lover.

There were even more people staring as the three of them marched through the room, pressed close together, heading purposefully to the doors, leaving the ball. All those people knew, or suspected, what they were going to be doing, and in a strange, perverse way, it pleased Alistair. He was proud to be walking out of the ballroom with those two people on his arms. He was proud to love them and he was proud and privileged to be taking them to his bed.

Chapter End Notes

This time after a slightly shorter break, I'm back again. I was on a week long trip abroad, and I wasn't sure I'd have the time to write, but all of you kind people giving me feedback were motivating me to carve out at least an hour in the evenings, so now I give you this.
I know nothing about dancing, as you probably noticed. All the descriptions were based on my memories of dancing scenes from period dramas which I avidly watched in high school. I hope it wasn't too distracting. Also, I might've made my shittiest pun yet in this chapter, and I'm proud of it.

As always, thank you for all your comments and kudos. Keep them coming - they really mean a great deal to me (it's kinda late now and I've thought about a truly terrible pun to make here, but I'll spare you that)
The king’s chambers

Chapter Notes

Hi there! I'm not dead. I just got a full time job. My student days are behind me, and now I can’t write at 2 am, the way I liked to, so I have to do it at 7 pm, like the responsible adult I pretend to be. There's also the matter of my thesis, and it's all a big mess. It might be slow going, for which I'm sorry, but I'm by no means giving up on the story. Thanks for sticking with me. Sloth_Race - I told you I'll write this chapter in reasonable time, and I failed at that, but in the end there it is.

My huge thanks to the incredibly kind and talented Manchanification. She's always encouraging me when I'm feeling down, and she helped me with this chapter. You're probably already reading her amazing story, Hero worship, but if for some reason you're not, do yourself a favor and go check it out.

And now on with the show.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Their steps quickened as they moved through the palace, all of them eager to get to their destination as fast as possible. Alistair wasn’t sure who started it, but at one point they found themselves running through the corridors, laughing like children, disentangling their arms and holding hands instead. They didn’t encounter many people on their way, but those whom they passed were all making shocked gasps, fueling their mirth.

Once they were close to his chambers, in the most private part of the palace, Alistair forced them to slow down. He knew the guard rotations, but they had to be careful. Explaining the situation to an actual guard who’d catch them, thinking they were some rowdy guests, trying to break into the king’s rooms, could end terribly.

They crept silently through a corridor, and Alistair poked his head around the corner, trying to assess the situation. A guard just turned another corner, disappearing from sight. Alistair pulled Cullen and Evelyn behind him, and they sprinted to the doors. In the prior week Alistair made it a point to have the hinges greased, and now the doors moved quietly, admitting them inside with almost no sound.

The lock clicked shut behind them, and there was a certain finality to that, just like back in Orlais. But this time there was no hesitation, no doubt. They ripped their masks off, sending the beautiful creations crashing to the floor, and started ripping at the elaborate costumes.

The thought of how much time and effort it took to make the costumes flashed briefly in Alistair’s mind, but he couldn’t stop himself from grabbing the front of Cullen’s jacket and yanking it open, making the buttons scatter, or tearing Evelyn’s sleeve as he tried to help her take the dress off. His lovers were not gentle with his clothes either. His cape had holes in it from Evelyn’s fingers and the seam in his breaches gave way under Cullen’s eager hands.

They were touching and kissing every newly exposed patch of skin, frantic to reacquaint themselves with each other’s bodies. Once again Alistair was reminded that he did not imagine the perfection that were his lovers. Evelyn’s skin was just as soft and Cullen’s muscles just as firm as he remembered. The way they made him shake with desire was also very real.
In no time at all they were almost completely naked, their clothing laying ruined at their feet. Cullen was trying to work Evelyn’s corset open, cursing under his breath. Alistair was glad his task was much simpler. With a quick and powerful motion he ripped Evelyn’s flimsy smalls from her body, making her gasp.

“You two are just the same!” she exclaimed.

Cullen started laughing behind her, laying his head against her neck, trying to suppress the sounds he was making.

“How so?” Alistair asked, puzzled by their behavior.

“Well…” Cullen lifted his head up, apparently having composed himself. “I also ruined a pair of her smalls that were supposedly very expensive and beautiful. I only cared for what was underneath them, so I can’t say I even remember what they looked like, but Evelyn was none too pleased.”

“It was a fine Orlesian silk with very rare blue Antivan lace,” Evelyn informed them.

Cullen just shrugged noncommittally before going back to fighting with the corset.

“Did you apologize nicely?” Alistair questioned.

Cullen just grinned.

“I was persuaded to forgive him for this terrible crime against fashion. He made some very compelling arguments.” Evelyn tilted her head and smiled at Cullen who bend down to kiss her briefly.

“And what was it that I ruined?” Alistair wanted to know.

“This?” Evelyn indicated the scrap of material which Alistair dropped to the floor. “This came all the way from Nevarra. It was a unique piece. There were Rivani pearls stitched at the sides.”

“Was it more valuable than the pair Cullen destroyed?”

“Oh yes, far more valuable.”

“In that case…” Alistair went down to his knees, “…my apology has to be even better, and my arguments even more compelling.”

He grasped Evelyn’s ankle, guiding her leg up and over his shoulder, making her open to him. How he missed that – her pretty pink cunt glistening in invitation, her smell beckoning him on. With satisfaction he saw Evelyn lean back against Cullen’s chest, her breath leaving her with a faint whimper. He hasn’t done anything yet and she was already trembling.

Her leg, still in those absurdly high shoes, dug into his back. He was going to feel it the next day, but he didn’t care. There was something beautifully obscene in the way she looked wearing nothing but the corset and stockings. He kissed her thigh right above where the stocking was fastened. He had no desire to take those off. Moving up her leg, licking and lightly biting her flesh, he enjoyed the way Evelyn’s breathing sped up.

She was watching him, and Cullen was watching him as well. He felt their gazes almost like a physical thing - heavy and exciting. Alistair tried to look up at them and see their reaction as he made the first swipe with his tongue along Evelyn’s folds, but his eyes closed on their own accord. He missed that as well – the taste of her, the feeling of her on his tongue, and the way she grabbed at his
“Fuck,” she hissed as he traced nonsensical patterns over her folds, teasing her.

“The mouth on you.” Cullen laughed.

“The mouth on him,” Evelyn corrected, her nails biting into Alistair’s scalp slightly, her hips twitching.

Alistair grabbed her hips firmly, forcing her to stop moving. His tongue barely touched her entrance, and she gasped, trying to move again. He dug his fingers even harder into the soft flesh of her hips, and felt her getting even wetter. There were moments when she liked to be handled gently, reverently, but more often than not it was a decisive, hard touch that pleased her most.

Alistair felt her back bowing and heard a heavy swish of fabric. Looking up he saw the corset finally being discarded. It was Alistair’s turn to make a noise, choked against Evelyn’s flesh. Maker, but she had magnificent tits. It was a struggle deciding if he wished to stay between her legs or get up and run his lips and tongue all over her breasts. Cullen’s large hand covered one of her breasts, and he started tugging at the hard pink nipple, forcing tiny moans out of Evelyn.

“Missed those, have you?” She grinned, taking hold of Alistair’s palm, dragging it up from her hip, over her waist and ribs, finally placing it over her breast.

Alistair wasted no time in squeezing the soft flesh and pinching her nipple.

“You have no idea how I love to see both your hands over my body,” Evelyn told them in a rough whisper.

“I think we might have some idea,” Cullen answered. “There’s nothing like seeing you between us, completely at our mercy.”

Alistair wished to say something, to agree with Cullen, to say how glorious Evelyn looked, but his mouth was too busy. Instead he decided to pick that moment to lick up to the top of Evelyn’s sex, to the place she wanted it most, and was rewarded with a long moan.

He couldn’t hold her with just one hand, and she moved again, but quickly stilled. It was Cullen, lending a hand, as it were, grasping her hip. Alistair continued running his tongue over that firm bud, and saw Evelyn’s head fall back against Cullen’s shoulder, who in turn took the opportunity to start kissing her bared throat. Evelyn brought her free hand up, circling Cullen’s neck, tangling her fingers in his hair, tilting her head to allow him better access.

She was a vision, vulnerable and desperate, her body pressed and pulled by two sets of hands, two mouths caressing her. This was the stuff the obscene Orlesian poems were written about. But Alistair couldn’t be distracted by admiring the view. He moved down to lap at her juices again before returning to sucking at the bundle of nerves.

Evelyn was close. He knew if from her tensed muscles and the needy whimpers she was making.

“Will I be forgiven?” Alistair asked, pulling away from her.

Evelyn gasped at the loss, her eyes snapping to him, fire in the blue irises.

“You’ll have to find out,” she told him.

“That’s not an answer.”
Cullen chuckled at Alistair’s comeback. Evelyn looked surprised. Normally Alistair would do all she wanted right away, but this time he wished to try something a bit different.

She attempted to bring his head closer again, but Alistair easily resisted.

“Will the matter of the smalls be forgotten?” he demanded again, pulling on her nipple.

There was a moment in which Alistair thought she was going to prolong that contest of wills, but she just sighed with frustration.

“All will be forgiven, just please…”

Alistair couldn’t have stopped himself even if he wanted after hearing the need in her voice. He didn’t have the iron will that Cullen possessed. With a broad grin, he bent down and sucked at her pearl. There was a beginning of a shout on her lips, but then Cullen was kissing her, silencing her. Alistair pressed the tip of his tongue against her and that made her tumble over the edge, quivering all over, her enthusiastic sounds not fully muffled by Cullen’s mouth.

With soft licks Alistair prolonged Evelyn’s pleasure, until she started pulling on his hair. He went up slowly, kissing her stomach, ribs, and finally the slope of her breast. His mouth brushed against Cullen’s fingers grasping her breast, before finally latching onto her nipple. Cullen’s fingers were caressing his face in turn, running over the bottom of his lip, feeling it tremble with its sucking motion.

“Come up for a kiss,” Cullen told him.

Alistair made a sound of protest in the back of his throat, echoed by Evelyn, but in the end had to relent. There was an implicit order in Cullen’s tone, something Alistair couldn’t ignore or disobey.

He rose to his full height and pressed his lips against Cullen, giving him a taste of their woman. Cullen swept his tongue into Alistair’s mouth, demanding all he had, which was no less than Alistair was willing to give.

Evelyn moved between them and they broke apart with a groan. Alistair was painfully hard and Evelyn grinding against him reminded him of that fact.

“I think someone’s jealous,” Alistair teased.

Evelyn rolled her eyes at him.

“I just thought we might move this from the doors to a bed. I’ve been told you have one of those.”

“Have a thing for desk, do you?” Alistair demanded, feeling himself begin to smile.

“That she does,” Cullen confirmed. “That discovery has been beneficial to me for more reasons than the obvious. I’ve always had a mess on my desk, but I learned to organize better and put documents away to drawers after I had to rewrite half a dozen reports which had some… uh… stains on them.”
Alistair could imagine it - Cullen’s large desk, cluttered with papers, and on it Evelyn, her dress hiked up, head thrown back as Cullen fucked her. Just another image to add to the collection that was going to keep him warm when they would leave.

“I’m such a great leader, teaching valuable lessons in a practical manner.” Evelyn grinned shamelessly.

“Well, I also have quite the mess on my desk,” Alistair informed her. He was going to have Evelyn on that desk, papers or no papers, and from that day he was going to always be just a bit more distracted while working there.

“Then you need the right incentive to get it neat. But that’s for another day,” Evelyn told him. “Before I can go anywhere, I’m taking these off.” She stepped out of her shoes and sighed in relief. “They’re new and my feet have been killing me.”

“You’re so small again.” Alistair patted her head. She did look tiny without the shoes, and he found it endearing.

“I’m not!” she protested. “My height is perfectly average. You’re an absurd giant.”

“Absurd giant? That wounds me deeply.” Alistair pressed his hands over his heart, putting on a shocked face.

Cullen just shook his head, amused by their antics.

“Let’s go make you feel better then, you gargantuan freak,” Evelyn offered.

She wanted to walk away, but Alistair quickly bent down and picked her up, throwing her over his shoulder. A surprised shriek tore itself out of her mouth. His back was not going to thank him for this, but her reaction was so worth it.

“What are you doing?” Evelyn demanded.

“Well, I’m the hulking brute who’s kidnapping a tiny damsel,” he informed her. “Haven’t you read any fairy tales?”

“I was hoping this would be less of a children’s story and more of a dirty novel Cassandra would read,” Evelyn countered. “But I can obligé you.” She cleared her throat. “Oh no, put me down!” She started kicking her legs lightly and swatting his back with her hands. “Begone, creature!” Her voice was absurdly high, and it made Alistair and Cullen laugh.

“You don’t sound terrified in the slightest,” Cullen told her.

“I’m not really trying. You very well know that when I do try it’s quite something.”

“That it is, but right now I don’t think any pretending is necessary.”

“Agreed.” With that Alistair started walking.

“I’m not sure how that’s possible, but that’s both uncomfortable, with the blood rushing to my head and my tits dangling weirdly, and also incredibly sexy,” Evelyn told them, her hands tracing the contours of Alistair’s back muscles.

“I think your breasts don’t look weird at all dangling like this. I’m enjoying the view,” Cullen assured her.
“Speaking of views, I should be giving you the tour of the place,” Alistair said, realizing that he was again being a bad host. Although he was carrying one of his guests over his shoulder, so most rules of propriety were already out of the window.

“I hate to break it to you, but we’re not here for the interior decorations,” Cullen told him, amusement evident in his voice.

“Just in case - we went from the entrance hall to the sitting room, and now we’ll be entering the most important part.” Alistair stopped to open the doors. “The royal bedchamber with the royal bed.”

Alistair cast a quick glance around the room. There was fire in the fireplace, candles were burning, and the bed was unmade - the ridiculous amount of pillows that was always piled up on it now hidden away. It looked presentable.

“Put me down. I can’t see anything,” Evelyn complained.

Smiling to himself, Alistair strode over to the bed, and unceremoniously dumped his lover in the center. She gasped as she bounced on the soft mattress.

“You’re incorrigible.”

“Just doing what you asked me to.”

“In that case, strip and come join me here,” Evelyn ordered, getting into a sitting position. “And the same goes for you, Cullen.”

They both saluted, and laughed as they realized that they were performing the mocking gesture simultaneously.

“You’re a bad influence on Cullen,” Evelyn muttered. “Maker, that’s one huge bed,” she observed.

“It’s supposed to be very old,” Alistair told her, working on the laces of his breeches. “Maybe one of my ancestors was very fat. Or a restless sleeper. Or he and his wife wanted plenty of space between each other.”

“Or maybe you’re not the first Theirin having wild threesomes in this bed,” Cullen suggested.

Alistair looked up from his breeches and saw that Cullen was completely naked, leaning casually against a bedpost. He looked magnificent, all his muscles illuminated perfectly by the candlelight, his cock standing thick and proud.

“Not fair.” Alistair huffed. “You can’t talk about my ancestors being all gross and sexual while you look like that. That’s a mixed message - my brain can’t decide if it wants to be disgusted or really turned on.”

“That must be so hard for you.” Evelyn laughed, and reached for Cullen’s hand, pulling him on the bed with her. “Maybe king Arland liked to have two women in his bed.” She run her hand over Cullen’s chest. “Maybe king Brandel preferred an all-male orgy.” Her hand wandered down Cullen’s stomach, while he started running his fingers over her breasts. “Or perhaps queen Moira had two men with her.” Evelyn was stroking Cullen’s cock languidly.

“I’m… That’s… That’s my grandmother. Ewww…” Alistair made a face, but in all honesty he wasn’t paying much attention to Evelyn’s words - he could only watch. There was no doubt about it - no amount of potentially amorous ancestors could ruin the sight before him.
He had to join his lovers, but the laces weren’t cooperating, so Alistair just yanked them apart, discarding the breeches and smalls on the floor in one quick movement. He jumped on the bed, making it shake. Evelyn fell on her back and pulled Cullen with her. Alistair crawled forward and hovered over them.

“No more ancestor sex talk,” he told them in his most commanding royal tone.

“No more,” Evelyn promised before bringing him down for a kiss. “There are much more interesting things to talk about. Like how you two are going to fuck me at the same time.”

Alistair knew his eyes must have widened. It was something that, for lack of a better term, made sense for such a combination of three people. He’s thought about it, but wasn’t sure if Evelyn was going to be ready for something like that. Hearing her say it send a bolt of arousal straight to his cock.

“That’s what we’ve discussed after we got your letter,” Cullen told him. “I was inside her when she asked me what I wanted, and I told her I wanted this - all three of us as close as possible.”

Alistair groaned. The mental image, the promise of what was to come - it was almost too much.

“Is this something you’d like?” Evelyn asked him.

“Is that even a serious question?” Alistair shook his head at the absurdity. “Of course! Just tell me how exactly you want to… proceed.”

Evelyn placed her hand in the middle of his chest and gave him a gentle push, making him lay next to her. With a pull at his hand she turned him on his side, facing her. He went easily, pliant in her hands, ready for whatever she demanded. Evelyn threw her leg over his hip and pressed herself close to him. Her hand sneaked down, running over his chest and stomach, making him shiver. At last she reached his cock and wrapped her skilled fingers around it.

With all she was doing Alistair barely noticed that Cullen got up from the bed, but soon he was back, nestled behind Evelyn.

“Like this,” she said, guiding the tip of Alistair’s cock between her folds, touching herself with it. He held himself back with supreme effort, fighting the need to thrust into her soft body. “I want to be so full, everywhere,” Evelyn whispered in a husky tone.

There was a movement from Cullen, and Evelyn moaned.

“Since we got this letter we’ve been preparing for this,” Cullen told him. “She was so eager, and I know she can take it.”

Evelyn started panting and Alistair glimpsed Cullen’s fingers disappearing between Evelyn’s pert cheeks.

“Does it feel good?” he asked her.

“Yes, Maker, it does.” Her hips were undulating, making Alistair’s cock rub against her wet folds. “You of all people must know how great Cullen is at this.”

Alistair grinned at her. He did know very well. That night in Orlais was like nothing he’s ever felt before. Leaning over Evelyn’s shoulder, he kissed Cullen. He was losing himself in the sensation of firm lips and rough stubble when he felt Evelyn guiding his cock to her entrance, the head barely breaching her.
“Maker, I need to be inside you now, I need to fuck you, feel your sweet cunt all around me,” he whispered hoarsely into her ear.

Evelyn rewarded him with a moan and a movement of her hips that pushed him further into her. It was pure bliss, and Alistair pressed in all the way, panting hard.

“You’ve missed it, haven’t you?” Cullen demanded.

“Fuck. I never thought I could miss something as badly as I missed the two of you.” Alistair started moving, slowly at first, trying to control himself.

“Are you ready?” Cullen asked Evelyn.

“Yes, please, take me now. I need you both.”

She moaned as Alistair involuntarily thrust harder into her. Alistair watched Cullen removing his fingers and quickly slicking up his cock with the oil.

“Hold her open for me,” Cullen instructed.

Alistair moved his hand from Evelyn’s waist to her arse, filling his palm with one round cheek, and stilling his own movements. He watched Evelyn’s face, her eyes falling shut, her mouth open on a soft breath.

“Fuck. I feel you there.” Alistair should’ve been expecting that, but it still shocked him in the best way possible when he felt Cullen’s cock moving against his as he pushed slowly into Evelyn.

“Yes, I feel it too. Maker.” Cullen’s voice sounded strained and rough. “Do you like it Evelyn?”

“Yes, yes, yesss…” Her voice trailed off when Alistair moved a fraction. “Don’t stop.”

“I don’t want to stop, ever. I want to fuck your tight little arse and feel Alistair’s prick right next to mine. How does it feel to have two cocks inside you?”

Alistair and Evelyn both groaned. Hearing Cullen speak like this was pushing the limits of Alistair’s self control.

“Good. So good,” Evelyn responded.

Alistair felt Cullen bottoming out, staying still when he was completely sheathed.

“Just good?” Cullen demanded.

He started moving and Alistair hissed at the slow drag of his full length against his own erection. Taking it as his queue, he also began thrusting.

“Damn you, I don’t even have words for it.” Evelyn held on to Alistair’s shoulder, and shifted her hips. “I’m so full and I love it.”

Alistair needed more leverage and moved to grab her hip, finding Cullen’s hand already there. Their fingers intertwined as they pressed on the soft flesh. They started establishing some kind of a rhythm, a push and pull, one retreatting and the other surging, shallow, hard thrusts. Their legs were tangled and Alistair wasn’t sure whose voice he was hearing as their moans mingled.

He didn’t know how long he was going to last. He felt Evelyn’s cunt and Cullen’s cock at the same time and it would be too much even if he haven’t went months without either. He’s never felt closer
to anyone. True emotional connection was something that was missing from his life, but at this moment he felt the physical closeness more keenly. He looked on at Evelyn’s tiny body squeezed between them, writhing, pressing, taking all of them. Nothing was ever more erotic, nothing ever felt better.

They usually talked more, it was their way - vocal and unrestrained, but now none of them seemed able to formulate actual sentences anymore. It was just mostly harsh breathing and occasional curses. They were frantic, and he would be worried about Evelyn, but she was the one guiding them, affirming her enjoyment.

Her hand migrated between their bodies. She was touching herself, and Alistair felt the drag of her knuckles over his groin, her nipples against his chest. He prayed she was going to come soon because he couldn’t handle it all, his senses overwhelmed.

“Come inside me, I’m…”

She didn’t finish the sentence. Alistair felt her walls squeezing him, heard her long unbroken moan as she shook through her orgasm. He didn’t hold back anymore. He did as she told him, feeling the orgasm rip through him. He gasped as he emptied himself inside her, experiencing a new level of pleasure. Vaguely he heard Cullen’s groans, felt his hand tightening over his fingers, knowing he was there with him, in this blissful state.

When they were all finished, they remained pressed together. Evelyn has wrapped her arm around his back, and Cullen moved his hand to hold hers there. Alistair reached over Evelyn to place his palm on Cullen’s back. Their breathing was normal but they still didn’t say anything, just laying and feeling that perfect intimacy.

“Don’t let me fall asleep,” Evelyn murmured. “The night is young and we have much to make up for.”

“I think this was an excellent start to that,” Cullen responded.

“Just excellent?” Evelyn mocked him.

“Impossibly perfect?” Cullen amended.

“Better.”

Evelyn rewarded him by turning her face to him and giving him a long kiss. When they parted, Cullen reluctantly rolled to his back. Alistair also let go of Evelyn, feeling the need for his skin to cool off.

“Do you have some kind of towel?” Evelyn asked.

“Towel? Oh, right.”

Alistair reached to his nightstand, where a piece of cloth was strategically placed. His first instinct was to give it to Evelyn, but then a thought occurred to him, and he moved to kneel between her parted legs. There was something primal and possessive in seeing her marked like this, the evidence of their joining on her flesh.

“You have the seed of two men dripping down your thighs,” he told her, his voice low and rough, pressing the cloth to her cunt gently. “How does it make you feel?”

“Like I’ve been claimed, like I belong to you, completely, body and mind. All that I am, it’s yours.”
She looked at Alistair first, then at Cullen, and her eyes shone with lust and affection. Her words were somehow solemn, if still sultry. As it so often happened, Alistair wanted to both fuck her senseless and hold her tenderly, telling her how much he loved her.

“And we belong to you, and to each other,” Cullen said.

Alistair threw away the cloth and laid down, his head on Evelyn’s chest. There were words pressing from the inside of his mouth, begging to be let out, but for once he held them back. Evelyn and Cullen’s words sounded like promises, like vows, but what he wanted to say was even more final, absolute. He wanted to say that he’d keep them together forever, that there was no turning back, that this was how it was always meant to be.

He didn’t say any of it, though, because he was somehow afraid that it was too much, too overwhelming. One day he was going to say it, and they were going to believe him, but now he just contented himself with listening to Evelyn’s breathing.

Cullen also nestled close to her, and he caught Alistair’s gaze, his mouth quirking in a smile that heralded only trouble.

“Remember what I told you in the ballroom?” Cullen asked, his voice conversational.

There was a split second when Alistair wondered what exactly did Cullen mean, but then he knew, and all the sentimental thoughts vanished from his mind, replaced by overwhelming arousal. “I’m looking forward to sucking your cock later in the evening, Your Majesty.”

It was ridiculous - Alistair was not a teenager anymore, and relatively little time has passed since he came, but just the memory of those words made his cock stir in interest.

“Maker’s breath, do I remember,” he responded.

“And what was it, pray tell, that he told you?” Evelyn demanded. “I feel very left out.”

Cullen was still looking right at Alistair, that smirk firmly plastered on his face. Alistair felt his breathing go shallow. This anticipation was slowly killing him, while Cullen seemed to relish in it.

“I think you know what I told him, what I promised I’d do to him.”

“That.” There was a smile in Evelyn’s voice. “I didn’t know tonight was the night.”

“It is. I just saw him there at the entrance to the ballroom, tall and regal, and all I wanted to do was rip his costume off and show him how much I missed him, how I’m not going to waste time anymore.”

They talked almost as if Alistair was not there, despite Cullen still pinning him with his heated gaze, and Alistair started to wonder if that was how they talked back in Skyhold, making their plans for him.

“I think I’ll leave you to it then,” Evelyn told them, gently pushing Alistair off herself and crawling to the foot of the bed. She settled on her side, head propped on her hand. Alistair’s eyes traced the curves of her body appreciatively, but his mind couldn’t stray far from Cullen, and he turned back to look at him.

“Are you ready, Your Majesty?” Cullen demanded.

“Absolutely.”
If Cullen was uncertain, he didn’t show it. In one fluid motion he got on top of Alistair, and started kissing him, his mouth open and hungry, his tongue demanding. It was one of those overwhelming kisses that turned Alistair’s head into mush. He didn’t even think to wrap his arms around Cullen, too preoccupied with just feeling, with being devoured.

When Cullen moved his head away, Alistair was left panting harshly. His eyes cracked open in time for him to catch Cullen’s smug expression, before he moved to bite at his neck. For a split second Alistair thought about asking Cullen not to leave marks, but in the end remained silent. He didn’t care. Telling Cullen to stop or change something felt ridiculous.

Those teeth soon moved to scrape over his nipple, then were quickly replaced by a tongue. That sensation was pleasant enough, but at the same time Cullen reached down, wrapping his hand around Alistair’s half hard cock and stroking slowly.

“Maker,” Alistair groaned, feeling his cock surge.

“Wrong.”

His lover’s movements halted.

“Cullen, Cullen, Cullen…” Alistair chanted, desperately needing Cullen to continue what he was doing.

“Good.”

Cullen’s hand started moving again, his tongue tracing the ridges of Alistair’s abdominal muscles.

Alistair watched him - head full of mussed blond hair moving lower, slowly, deliberately. This proud and beautiful man who was always so much in control, was solely focused on Alistair’s pleasure, and that realization was thrilling.

Alistair’s had people do that to him numerous times before, but it felt wrong even to think about that. This was different, new, better; more true and overwhelming. Yet that trail of thought brought something to the forefront of Alistair’s mind.

“You’ve never done this before,” he said.

Cullen paused, hovering over Alistair’s stomach, looking up at him, a question in his eyes, but also a hint of worry.

“You’re doing this just for me. I’m the one man who got the great Cullen Rutherford to suck his cock,” Alistair explained, feeling pride and possessiveness.

In truth it would not matter if Cullen would’ve been with dozens of men before, because he was with him now, and if Alistair had his way, he’d remain this way always. But at the same time there was something special about claiming this first time, knowing that it was something that belong to them alone.

His answer seemed to quell Cullen’s unease, and a smirk returned to his face.

“You must feel pretty special,” he murmured, starting to trace some sort of pattern with his tongue.

“Uh-huh,” Alistair confirmed, not really able to go beyond nonsensical syllables, anticipation making him less than eloquent. Cullen’s tongue was hot and wet on his skin, and it was getting close to his erection, which he was still stroking.
“You’ve thought of this, here, in your bed, imagining my mouth instead of your hand, haven’t you?” Cullen prompted, his breath warm over the head of Alistair’s cock, his hand stilling at the base.

Alistair felt his hips twitching upward in a futile attempt to get closer to that mouth, but Cullen just pressed a firm palm over his stomach, holding him in place.

“Of course I did. And you were always less talkative, what with your mouth being otherwise occupied,” Alistair responded defiantly.

Cullen chuckled.

“Are you impatient? Impatient to have my mouth on that beautiful cock of yours?”

His lips were millimeters away from where they should be, and Alistair felt like he was going out of his mind.

“Yes, please, please, just do it. I’ve been waiting so lo…”

The pleading tone in his voice must have worked, because suddenly there was a tongue on the head, swirling around it in broad licks. The sensation was not unfamiliar, but this was Cullen and it felt so new, so strong.

“Mak… Cullen!” Alistair corrected himself hastily.

The tongue was gone, and Alistair wondered if his momentary lapse was the cause.

“Look at me,” Cullen ordered. “You said you’ve imagined it. I don’t want you to imagine it anymore. I want you to remember. I want you to watch me, and think about it when I’m not there.”

Alistair focused his gaze on Cullen, feeling as if he were under a spell, knowing he wouldn’t be able to look away even if he wanted to. But why would he want to? He needed that scene seared into his brain forever.

Cullen broke eye contact when he bent down, his warm mouth enveloping the crown of Alistair’s cock, starting to suck tentatively. Alistair tried to remain calm, but failed miserably, letting out a strangled groan. At the sound Cullen’s eyes flicked up. That was a sight worthy of a painting - a smile on Cullen’s lips which were wrapped around his cock, his eyes full of mischief. Seeing it, actually seeing it with his own two eyes, and not inside his mind, was affecting Alistair more than he could have thought.

“Keep going,” he urged. “Please, this feels so good.”

Cullen’s tongue joined his mouth, lapping at the slit, exploratory and teasing. And then he was moving down, taking more into his mouth, and Alistair felt like he was going to tear the sheets, he was grabbing them so tightly in his fists. The slow drag of lips over his cock was excruciating and perfect.

There was a frustrated sound, and Alistair realized that his lover was almost choking. There was determination on his face as he tried to get lower. It was a strange mixture of erotic and endearing. Alistair was about to tell him not to do force himself to do anything, but Cullen came to that conclusion on his own, moving up, his tongue tracing a vein on the underside of Alistair’s shaft.

Maybe it was instinct or natural talent - Alistair didn’t care which, but Cullen seemed to be improving by the second. He set a steady pace, not going as slowly as he did at first, but not
hurrying. His mouth couldn’t take all of Alistair, but that hardly mattered, when his hand was taking care of the rest.

Alistair was watching him closely, mesmerised by the sight of his cock disappearing between those firm lips, but Cullen was also watching him. Alistair knew he was cataloguing all the sounds he was making, observing every reaction, every twitch and pulse. It was as if he were making notes for the future…

“You’re going to get so good at this, you’re going to destroy me,” Alistair told him on an uneven breath. “And I’m going to enjoy having you practice on me over and over.”

His only response was a smirk and an obscenely wet sound as Cullen returned to sucking on the head for a moment.

“Fuck,” Alistair cursed. This was not going to last very long. Maybe he should worry about that, but who could worry about anything while feeling this much visceral pleasure?

In a moment there were fingers on his balls, massaging them insistently, and Alistair felt his control unraveling further.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw movement behind Cullen. It was Evelyn, crawling towards them. Alistair wondered for a moment what was her plan, before she pressed herself to Cullen’s back. Alistair felt the vibration of Cullen’s moan over his cock when she touched him. He could imagine the feeling of her soft skin and hard nipples - a shock of pleasure Cullen wasn’t expecting.

There was another sound, sending waves of sensation through Alistair. Evelyn’s arm started moving, jerking Cullen’s cock as he continued sucking Alistair off.

“I love seeing you like this, you look so good,” Evelyn murmured over Cullen’s shoulder, before placing a kiss on his skin. “You both do,” she added, glancing up at Alistair. “Maybe next time I’ll just sit on your face and just look down on Cullen sucking your cock while you lick at my cunt.”

“An excellent i…” Alistair broke off his comment as he felt Cullen do something he couldn’t quite describe, “…idea,” he finished. “I’m so damn close.”

Cullen looking smug, working him like it was the most natural thing in the world, and Evelyn talking dirty, her voice low and seductive - it was all too much.

For his part, Cullen slowly and deliberately pulled his mouth off him, his tongue giving a parting lick to the tip of Alistair’s cock, before he focused on just moving his hand.

“Come for me,” he ordered, and hearing that rough voice after what felt like such a long silence, pushed Alistair right off the edge.

Despite wanting to keep watching, Alistair felt his eyes closing as his mouth fell open on a moan. The orgasm rocked through him in waves, going on and on. He was dimly aware that Cullen was making his own sounds of pleasure at Evelyn’s hand, and Alistair enjoyed that thought.

When he came down, he quickly blinked his eyes open, needing to see the scene before him. Cullen was supporting himself on his arms, breathing heavily, his chest and stomach painted with splattering of his own and Alistair’s seed. Evelyn was draped over him, smiling.

“Enjoyed yourself, Majesty?” she asked, her slender fingers running through the mess on Cullen’s body.
“‘Yes’ feels a bit inadequate at this point, but don’t make me try and talk in long sentences now,” Alistair responded. “Thank you, Cullen.”

“Any time.” His lover grinned at him. “Practice, and all that. But for now let me lie a bit.”

Evelyn slid from his back, and Cullen turned to lie along Alistair, catching the towel she threw his way, and cleaning himself.

“It’s a bit funny - you gave a ball with the express purpose of us not attending it,” Evelyn observed. “But it’s perfect. I don’t think we would’ve had even a tenth of the fun we’re having here if we were in the ballroom.”

She moved between them, laying her head on Cullen’s stomach, and throwing her legs over Alistair’s.

“That’s the best ball I didn’t really attend,” Cullen agreed.

“And it’s not even over.” Alistair yawned. “Maker, I’m tired. Let’s take a tiny nap.”

“We should gather our strengths,” Evelyn said, her eyes already drifting close. “We’re not done here.”

“I don’t think we’ll ever be truly done. But I’ll wake you up in an hour,” Cullen promised.

Alistair was never so grateful for someone’s light sleep.

Chapter End Notes

I’ve started writing the next chapter, but I’m not making any promises about when I’ll finish - I don’t want to disappoint. The chapter after that is already done, so the break between them will be shorter. That one’s a bit different, a bit more... I pushed myself in my smut writing, and you’ll have to judge if it was the right call.

As always comments and kudos are greatly appreciated. you can also find me on tumblr
The small moments

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time was a strange thing, Alistair decided. It never flowed the way you’d want or expect it to. When he was a boy the morning prayers seemed to last for ages, as he fidgeted and glanced around in boredom, earning disapproving scowls from the Chantry sisters. Back then everything dragged on so slowly. He was waiting for something, he knew, looking back on those days.

He wanted his life to start in earnest, and it did when he joined the Wardens. The Blight made everything a blur of action, things spinning out of control in almost no time at all. There were decisions made in split seconds and battles won in a heartbeat. There was something enjoyable in that, frightening but exciting. This was what true living felt like.

And then he became the king, and life was slow again, torturously slow at times. One day was so much like the other. He tried to fill his time with enjoyable distractions, to reward himself for enduring hours of listening to petty nobles squabble, and having to learn the geopolitical implications of the changing prices of Antivan spices.

Those distractions were nice for a time, but they never truly made him happy - they were fleeting, just a surface thing. He couldn’t say he was unhappy. He was comfortable and was afforded many privileges. There was some space between happy and unhappy, a realm of suspension where he floated aimlessly, not reaching any heights, but not plummeting to the depths either.

Just when he was all but resigned to permanently reside in this state between states, he met them - Evelyn and Cullen, two people he grew to love. Two people who grew to love him, which in itself was much more surprising, he thought. But that was not exactly the point. The point was that everything sped up again when they entered the picture. He was happy, and time was slipping through his fingers, disappearing much too quickly.

When he was with them, days flew by. He wanted to catch the hands of the clocks, hold them down and not let them move, to extend the time, but it was not how that worked. Then again, when he had to leave them, time started to crawl again. He’d try to hypnotise the clocks, force them to move faster, but it felt like they were mocking him, grinding even slower.

The wait for their visit was almost unbearable, but once they arrived time got away from them. One week - that was all they had left. How did this happen? They had a month. A full month, and now just those few days. A month was not enough, not by a long shot. A year wouldn’t be enough. Maybe forever wouldn’t be enough.

Could days be long and tedious if every one of them had Cullen and Evelyn in it? Could their presence ever become just another fact of daily life, and not an unbelievable gift? He wanted to find out, needed to. That was his mission now, his one goal - to arrange it so that they would never part, that they’d get the luxury of plain old domesticity and routine.

That is, if that was what they wanted as well. He’d have to find out first, to be certain of their desires before he acted foolishly and rashly. For now he’d have to savor those last days - to make them truly memorable.

Despite the mad dash of time, he knew he’d remember every day of their visit keenly for the rest of his life.
On the surface this was an official visit, so there were some meeting they couldn’t get out of - negotiations with merchants, dinners with the nobility of Ferelden, discussions with military strategists. Those dragged on mercilessly, but they managed to find ways to amuse themselves, although it was mostly Evelyn having her fun.

She picked her dresses with the express purpose of tormenting Alistair and Cullen, it would appear. She also found a way to look perfectly innocent while her hand rested on Alistair’s knee or her foot nudged his leg.

Cullen also had a few tricks up his sleeve. He would stand a bit closer to Alistair than was strictly necessary, not really touching him, but letting him feel the heat radiating off his body and smell that unique scent of elderflower and oakmoss. He’d also brush his hand against Alistair while they worked over a map. Alistair was sure Evelyn was the one who gave him pointers - Cullen would not think to do those things on his own.

This was Alistair’s castle, his own domain, but they were outdoing him, and Alistair was helpless - working on suppressing his smiles or any other inappropriate reactions of his body. He made them pay when they were alone, but it seemed that was what they were hoping for.

He greatly enjoyed their intimacies, but he also loved all the chaste things they did together. He loved showing them Denerim, and taking them on trips outside of it. It was like he was discovering his city and country anew, watching them through Cullen and Evelyn’s eyes. He forgot how beautiful it all was - it has become ordinary to him, but now they were reminding him of all the charms of his land.

Evelyn loved the Amaranthine Ocean. When they were standing on a cliff she stared with fascination at the waves hitting the rocks below them, and gasped when a particularly high one splashed them with tiny droplets. Once they reached the beach below, she frantically ripped off her shoes, so she could feel the sand under her bare feet, and started running around like a child. Soon it was not enough, so she started taking her clothes off, remaining only in her undergarments, and dashed into the water, looking as happy and free in it as if she were a mermaid.

Cullen and Alistair were just staring at her, both glad to see her this elated. She beckoned to them from between the waves, waving her arms, jumping, and shouting about how great the water felt. They complied, but as they were dipping their toes, they found that despite it being a warm day, the water was freezing. Evelyn seemed to have some inhuman tolerance for the frigid water. She laughed at their undignified shrieks, splashing them, and grabbing their hands, pulling them deeper, until they were completely submerged, hair plastered to their faces, teeth chattering.

Alistair was never a great swimmer, and he found the ocean rather daunting, but Evelyn was fearless, racing to meet the cresting waves, letting them lift her up. Alistair experienced a moment of sheer panic when a particularly high surf brought Evelyn down under the surface. Forgetting his own lack of skill, he was about to jump to her rescue, when she emerged, spitting out water and laughing. Cullen looked as stricken as Alistair felt. Simultaneously, they started telling her to be more careful and not to act foolishly, but she ignored them, diving under and swimming towards them, yanking at their underclothes, and emerging from the depths with an impish smile on her face.

It felt to Alistair like the ocean was somehow making her reckless. She knew better than that. They were out in the open. There were guards posted nearby, tasked with making sure the king and his guests were not interrupted, but someone could still sneak past them, or the guards themselves could witness some inappropriate behavior and spread rumors.

Alistair would’ve liked to take Evelyn in his arms, tuck the wet strand of hair behind her ear and kiss the salt from her lips. He would’ve liked even better to rip the see-through material from her body and trace the path of water droplets with his mouth and tongue. But this was not the time nor the
place. She must’ve understood that at last, because she rolled her eyes and muttered “You’ll make it up to me”. That was a promise Alistair was more than happy to make.

When even Evelyn was tired of swimming and jumping the waves, they returned to the shore. Cullen and Alistair lied down on soft blankets, letting the sun dry their skin, while Evelyn marched up and down the beach, gathering shells and exclaiming loudly at each new find.

Soon they had to return to the castle to wash the salt from their bodies and get ready for a formal supper, but Alistair felt like it was a crime to drag Evelyn away from a place that made her so happy. She belonged there, by the ocean. She should live someplace where she could visit it as often as she wished.

As far as Alistair was concerned, from that day on, that ocean, and that small bay especially, belonged solely to her.

If Evelyn was the mistress of the ocean, then Cullen ruled over the mountains. When Alistair suggested making a longer excursion to the Dragon’s Peak, his reaction was more than enthusiastic.

As they rode out of Denerim, Cullen told them about the days he spend wandering the mountains around Kirkwall. He never talked much about those years, a few sentences here and there, and neither Alistair nor Evelyn ever pressed him for more. It was always clear that what happened there haunted him, and whenever he mentioned it, his voice was strained, but this time he sounded almost fond.

It sounded like he went hiking whenever he had a day off duty. He spoke of how calm the mountains made him, how freeing it was to be alone, away from the city, to hole up somewhere no-one ever went. He wasn’t a Templar there, he was just a man in cheap leathers, exploring nature.

It wasn’t much, but Alistair was glad Cullen had that - those small moments of peace, something that belonged to him alone.

As they trudged up the steep slope of the Dragon’s Peak, Alistair wondered if maybe he wouldn’t have preferred it if Cullen found solace in fishing or embroidery. Alistair was no stranger to climbing mountains, after the Temple of Sacred Ashes, but he hoped this time, without the Blight hanging over them, it would be more of a leisurely stroll. No such luck.

Cullen set a merciless pace, picking the most scenic, but also the most difficult paths. He walked fast, leaving Alistair and Evelyn behind, looking over his shoulder from time to time, and telling them to catch up. Neither Alistair nor Evelyn were in poor physical condition, but it seemed that hiking did not agree with them, while Cullen thrived. He truly did not understand what they were complaining about, but when they asked, he’d stop for a time, allowing them to rest against a tree and sip some water, but just as they were getting comfortable, he’d tell them it was time to go.

They reached the summit much earlier than Alistair expected. They rode as far up as they could on their horses the previous day, set up camp, and started their trek in the morning, arriving at their destination sometime after midday. The sun was high above them and there wasn’t a single cloud in sight, affording them an excellent view.

As they stood shoulder to shoulder, looking down the slope of the mountain and over the hills and valleys in the distance, Alistair had to admit that it was worth the climb, especially when he turned to watch Cullen smile. Yes, making him this happy was worth being sweaty and exhausted.

They rested for a time, sitting on the ground and eating dinner, and then just lying down, gazing up at the sky. They were alone, but Alistair and Evelyn were far too tired to take advantage of the fact.
Alistair was glad he had the good sense to ask them to sneak into his tent the previous night. Cullen and Evelyn were skeptical, but didn’t refuse him. They had to keep very quiet, not to alert the guards, and there was something exciting in the challenge. There were no lights, no sounds, just three desperate bodies pressed together.

The night after the climb there was not going to be any of that. Alistair joked that they should just roll him down the mountain, because he wasn’t sure his legs were going to support him. Cullen magnanimously agreed to choose the easiest paths, and they managed to make their way down just as the sun was setting. Alistair scarfed up some supper and fell onto his cot wearily, and so did Evelyn, while Cullen stayed up chatting with the guards.

Alistair hardly felt his legs as they rode back to Denerim, but it was a price he was willing to pay in return for listening to Cullen talk about how much he enjoyed himself. Yet when Cullen mentioned wanting to explore another mountain, Alistair and Evelyn looked at each other, their eyes wide. Neither of them was eager for more climbing, but could they really say no to Cullen?

Their next excursion was decisively less strenuous. They took a pleasure barge up the Drakon River, lazing in the sun, drinking wine and watching as the fields and forests floated by. They talked of nothing in particular, conscious of the presence of rowers and guards about, but still the conversation felt easy.

This proved to Alistair beyond any shadow of a doubt that what they had between them was not mere lust, not false love born from the feeling of physical intimacy. It was an affection rooted in friendship and companionship. Just being together like this was enough. Being in each other’s presence, exchanging words and glances was making them all happy.

Which in no way meant that they didn’t seek each other out in the nights. Never before was Alistair so glad of all the hidden passages that ran through the palace. He argued that they could’ve been built for safety reasons, while Evelyn and Cullen stood firm by their theory that there have been plenty of illicit affairs in the history of the royal seat. In the end it didn’t matter much - now they were useful to them.

The morning after the ball, Cullen and Evelyn could sneak out of his chamber unseen, and return the same evening.

It had been three weeks since that memorable night. Alistair still couldn’t quite believe it. It felt like Cullen and Evelyn were always there, like they were a part of his life for years. How could it have been just three weeks? And at the same time how could three weeks feel so short? Those were just more mysteries of time.

He’s felt more in those three weeks than he did in the past ten years. He woke up excited for the day to come, thinking of showing his lovers a particular spot in the city he thought they might enjoy or taking them haunting.

Now there was one more thing he wanted to arrange, something more significant than everything that came before. But first he needed to ask Evelyn’s opinion. As much as he wanted to go ahead with his plan, he’d never allow himself to jeopardize her position.

It was rather lucky that Cullen agreed to run some drills with the royal guard that afternoon. Alistair has been standing on the battlements overlooking the training yard for a while, letting his mind wander, solely focused on his thoughts, so Evelyn’s arrival startled him.

“Were you expecting someone else?” she asked, arching one brow.
“Now that you mentioned it…”
Evelyn swatted at his arm lightly.

“Cullen will be out soon,” she said. “What’s on your mind? Are you thinking about us leaving?”

“Yes,” he admitted. She knew him so well already, could read his expressions like an open book. “There’s something I want to do before you go, but I need your agreement first.”

“That sounds serious.” Evelyn leaned against the railing and looked him square in the face, her blue eyes concerned.

“It’s…” There was no point in downplaying it. “Listen, I’d really like to do this, but if you say I can’t, then I won’t. And I will not hold it against you.”

“Maker’s breath, what is it? You’re starting to make me worried.”
Alistair felt like he was going about it all wrong. He didn’t want to be the cause of her nerves.

“Do you remember when that Bann went after Cullen for not having a title anymore?”
Evelyn’s lips thinned as she nodded, the memory making her angry.

“I know you must hate seeing this as much as I do. I never want Cullen treated that way again. I’d really like to make people stop caring about titles, but that’s not a change I can make in my lifetime, so I think I’ve come up with the second best solution.” Alistair took a breath, steadying himself before his next words. “I want to knight him. I want him to be a knight of Ferelden.”
He held his breath, waiting for her reaction. Evelyn tilted her head and smiled brightly.

“That’s a very simple and elegant solution,” she told him.

Alistair felt relieved, but at the same time worry still gnawed at him.

“Orlais will find out, and they won’t like it,” he said.
Evelyn shrugged.

“Let them.”

“This might put you, him and the whole Inquisition in an awkward position,” Alistair pressed on. “You’re supposed to be impartial, not siding with Ferelden over Orlais, and the Commander of the Inquisition becoming a knight of Ferelden definitely doesn’t look neutral.”

“I know all that, and frankly I don’t care.” Evelyn waved her hand dismissively. “We saved the world - I think Cullen deserves some reward from his homeland, and if Orlais wants to quarrel over this, then I’m more than willing to put them in their place.”

Alistair couldn’t help grinning. She was a Marcher, but her distaste for Orlais rivaled that of any native Ferelden.

“The Inquisition won’t last forever, you know,” she added. “It was brought to life for one purpose, and we’ve served it. There are small matters to attend to here and there, but we are not really needed anymore. I have no desire to amass power or become some kind of new force in Thedas. We don’t have to be bound by our roles in the Inquisition.”
“I… haven’t thought of this before. Is this truly what you want?”

Alistair’s heart was beating faster. If the Inquisition ceased to be, then so many new possibilities opened up.

“Yes.” Evelyn didn’t hesitate before answering. “I want a new life, a new path. I’d enjoy having more free time. Time to maybe spend in Denerim?”

She bit her lip nervously, glancing at Alistair, as if she wasn’t sure if he’d like the idea.

“You can move in right now,” he assured her.

“I’m glad you say that. I didn’t want to assume too much…” Her uncertain smile was entirely charming.

“If it were up to me you wouldn’t be leaving in a week. I already can’t wait for you to return.” Alistair glanced around, and seeing that they were alone, grabbed Evelyn’s hand, squeezing it affectionately. “Does Cullen feel the same way?”

“We’ve talked about it, and we both feel that it’s a good thing that the Inquisition is coming to an end. We’ve worked so hard, and now it’s time for us to live a little. We thought a grateful king might show us a good time.” Her uncertainty has melted away, and now she was flirting shamelessly.

“Yes. I can do that. One good time, coming right up.”

They smiled at each other.

“It might take some time. The organisation like the Inquisition won’t just fold in a day,” Evelyn said, turning serious. “Will you give us time?”

“Take all the time you need. I’m not going anywhere. And that’s a promise. Or a threat. Whichever you prefer.”

Evelyn laughed.

“I’ll take it as a promise,” she decided. “I really think your idea with knighting Cullen is a brilliant one. He’ll be so happy and proud.”

“I’m glad you approve. I want to save him from anything that might hurt him, and this seemed like a good way of taking care of the problem of obnoxious nobles.”

Cullen picked that moment to emerge onto the training ground, waving when he saw Alistair and Evelyn on the battlements.

“Look at him - he’s so strong, but I still feel like we need to protect him,” Evelyn said, waving back.

“I know what you mean. And I think we’re succeeding.”

“That we are.”

They stood in silence for long moments, watching Cullen sparring with the guards.

The conversation went much better than Alistair could’ve hoped. He was preparing himself to let go of the idea, but Evelyn embraced it wholeheartedly. And what’s more, she gave him another thing to look forward to, another hope. Without the Inquisition his lovers would be free, free to do what they wanted, and what they wanted could turn out to be being with him.
“Are you ready for tonight?” Evelyn asked, breaking his line of thought.

“I should be asking you that.”

Their big plan for the night. In his sentimental musings Alistair’s almost forgot about it. This was Evelyn’s fantasy, something she’s been planning for a long while, and he hoped the reality would not be too much for her.

“Oh, I’m ready for all you have.” Evelyn sounded more than sure.

With that settled all Alistair could do was hope he’d be able to rise to the challenge.

Chapter End Notes

This was a small break from smut, and I hope it was still enjoyable. I kind of saw this chapter in my head like one of those montages in romantic comedies where people do cute shit like riding tandem bikes, baking, and running in the rain, before hiding under a convenient awning and kissing, while an annoyingly catchy song plays in the background.

This time I can promise that the next chapter will be here in exactly 2 weeks. I'm both excited and nervous about it. It's kinkier that my usual fair, so I guess be ready for that.

Until then, comments and kudos would be super nice.
The maid

Chapter Notes

First of all - my huge thanks to Manchanification. Without her encouragement I wouldn't have the nerve to post this, or even try writing it. Everyone needs a friend who will support them in the pursuit of filth.

Before we proceed, I just want to make some kind of forewarning - this is different than what I normally do. I don't want to oversell it or undersell it. Some of you have read far dirtier things than this (I know I have), so this won't shock you in the slightest. But I'm sure there are some sensitive souls out there who are definitely not into that sort of thing. So heed the tags, and if this is not your cup of tea, then skip this chapter - the more standard, fluffy content will resume in the next chapter. And if you do enjoy my foray into kink - I have ideas for 2 more chapters in a similar vein.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Evelyn opened the side doors leading to the throne room, and slipped inside quietly, turning the key in the lock behind herself. She’s already been there before, but now the chamber looked so different. When she was there last it was in the middle of the day, light filtering in through the high windows, dozens of people surrounding her. Now the empty room looked even bigger, more severe and intimidating. There were shadows cast by the few candles placed around. The flames flickered in the gentle draft that Alistair always bemoaned, the banners overhead flapped, making it look like strange shapes were moving against the walls.

There was nothing to worry about, Evelyn told herself. Jumping at shadows was absurd, especially considering what she’s faced before. Maybe, just maybe, she could concede that she was a tiny bit nervous. Logically she knew that the threat of discovery here was no greater than in any other part of the castle. All the doors were locked, and she, being the deft rogue that she was, made sure that the few keys belonging to guards or servants were missing from their chains. Still, being out in the open, even under those circumstances, was a bit stressful.

And then there was the whole reason they were there to consider. She’s never done anything like it. It was not that she was apprehensive, far from it - she was the one who came up with the whole idea, and was excited to see her plan come to fruition. What was making her uncertain was whether she could remain in character, perform. She also worried about Alistair. She loved the man dearly, but could he be counted on to remain serious and not shy away from the more intense parts of the game?

At this point Evelyn was just stressing herself out for no reason. They’ve planned it for far too long to back out now (not that she would actually want to), and besides, if they failed, they’d at least have something to laugh about.

Calming her thoughts, she climbed up the steps leading to the throne, and sat down. It felt cold and hard, just like her own back at Skyhold. She’s heard that no-one should feel comfortable on a throne, wielding the tremendous power it symbolised, but to be perfectly honest, she always believed that not having a sore behind always improved her mood and made her a more reasonable person to deal with. That thought made her smirk to herself - this time her behind was definitely going to get sore, but it was all a part of her design.
Evelyn knew she shouldn’t dwell on her thoughts for too long. She’s already wasted far too much time on contemplating the appearance of the chamber and her worries. She had to be prepared for when Cullen and Alistair arrived.

Experimentally, she wiggled on the seat a bit, moving lower, into a more casual pose. They haven’t discussed every detail, so that was left to her discretion. She hiked her simple dress up, bunching it around her waist, and placed a leg on the arm of the chair, exposing herself to whoever would walk through the doors. She felt brazen and wicked, and it sent a rush of warmth to her core. Without thinking much, Evelyn pushed the dress down her arm enough that she could bare one breast. She wished she could have her hair fanned behind her head for better effect, but they all agreed that a braid was much more practical for their purposes.

Even if her hair was not perfect, she knew that she had to present quite the sight. Soon Cullen and Alistair would be there, and they’d see her like this, ready for them. One of her hands drifted between her legs, and she started touching herself, moaning at the feeling of just how wet the thought of what was about to happen made her. Her other hand went to her exposed breast, gently tweaking her nipple, which stood hard in the draught. She wished fervently that her lovers would arrive soon - she couldn’t make herself come like this, since that was not part of the plan, but she was already beyond excited. She kept her touches light, trying to control herself.

Her eyes were trained on the doors, but as time went by, they kept drifting closed in her pleasure, so the surprised gasp she let out when she heard the doors opening was a genuine one. She froze for a moment, staring at Cullen and Alistair. Their eyes were glued to her as well, and so they all remained motionless, as if waiting for something to happen.

Evelyn was the first one to react. She hastily jumped to her feet, her skirt falling down, offering her some modesty, and curtseyed.

“Your Highness, Captain Cullen,” she squeaked out, her voice unnaturally high.

“What’s going on here?” Cullen demanded, sounding shocked and angry.

“I… I was…” Evelyn stuttered. She reached for the top of her dress, trying to cover herself up.

“No.” That one simple word from Alistair made her stop. There was true commanding strength in his voice.

“Your Majesty?” Evelyn asked timidly, her hand holding the dress limply.

“Leave it be,” the king ordered.

“But, Your Majesty…” she started to protest feebly.

“You will do as I say,” he cut her off. The way he sounded, and looked at her, made her shiver. She dropped her arm to the side, leaving her breast exposed. “And you won’t derail this conversation,” Alistair continued. “Captain Cullen asked you a question, and you will answer him.”

Evelyn chewed her lip for a moment, looking down on the floor.

“Speak up, girl. We can’t hear you,” Cullen barked out.

“Begging your pardon, Your Majesty, Captain,” Evelyn all but whispered, still looking down.

“Stop staring at the ground, girl. You were rather brazen just minutes before, so you can very well look at us now,” Cullen told her.
Very slowly, she lifted her head, looking at them in turn, her hands clasped before her, worrying the material of her skirt.

“We’re still waiting for your answer. It’s bound to be good.” Cullen gave her a patronising smirk, crossing his arms.

“I’m the maid servant, I was…”

“Oh, we know who you are, Evelyn,” Alistair cut her off.

Evelyn blinked at him rapidly.

“You… You do?” she choked out.

“We make it a point to know the names of pretty little maids whose talents are being wasted on menial jobs like cleaning the floors after dark,” the king informed her. “But I was told you were a good girl, and now we know that’s not true.”

“I am a good girl, Your Majesty,” Evelyn insisted.

Cullen snorted derisively.

“I am good,” Evelyn repeated, sounding almost defiant.

“So what was a good girl like you doing here at this hour?” Cullen questioned.

“I was just cleaning, you see, and it’s so late, and I’ve been working since dawn, and I got tired. I just sat down for a moment to rest…”

“Don’t lie to us, girl,” Cullen ordered, glaring at her.

“I’m no liar, sir!” she exclaimed indignantly, meeting his gaze.

“No one’s saying that,” Alistair told her kindly. “I’m sure there is some truth to your words, but not all of it. I’m certain you’re working hard, but what you were doing on that throne, on my throne, was not resting. So out with it. What were you doing?”

“I was… Oh, Your Majesty, I’m so very sorry… For the lie and for what I was doing.” Evelyn hid her face in her hands.

“Easy now. There will be time enough for all that later. Now just say what you were doing,” Alistair prompted.

“Oh, you know what I was doing,” she mumbled from between her hands.

“Maybe we do, and maybe we don’t. The point is that your king is telling you to say it out loud, and you’re refusing.” Alistair’s tone was no longer kind, instead sounding annoyed. “Did you not hear me when I told you that you will do as I say? Will you add disobedience to lying and lewd behavior?”

“Begging your pardon, Your Majesty. I’m just… I’m so embarrassed. I’ve never done anything like that before,” Evelyn confessed, clasping her hands before herself.

“How good to know that she defiled your throne only once,” Cullen said, turning to Alistair, his voice laced with sarcasm.
“A thousand pardons. I have no idea what came over me…”

“Stop stalling, girl. Spit it out,” Cullen ordered, “or there will be consequences.”

Evelyn felt a tremor run through her at his last word.

“What consequences, Ser?” she asked.

“Can’t do what you’re told, can you?” Cullen asked. “Shall I demonstrate what the consequences are, Your Majesty?”

“By all means. I think she deserves that.” Alistair inclined his head.

Evelyn took a step back as Cullen stalked towards her, smirking dangerously. She couldn’t retreat far, bumping against the throne. Cullen loomed over her for a moment, before he moved to the side, sat on the throne, and with one decisive move, grabbed her by the waist and dragged her over his knees.

“What’s happening? What’s the meaning of this?” Evelyn demanded. She tried to get up, but Cullen’s arms were holding her down, unyielding like steel bars.

“Don’t squirm, girl. This is what happens when you’re disobedient and won’t follow the orders of your king and the Captain of his guard,” Cullen informed her. One of his hands moved to yank up her skirt, exposing her arse, making her gasp at the feeling of air on her bare skin. “You’ve brought this on yourself.”

Evelyn turned her head to look at Alistair, who stood with his arms crossed over his chest, smirking at her.

“Don’t look to me for mercy, because you will find none.” His tone was cold. “You could’ve told us all we wanted to hear right away, but you were deceitful and obstinate. This could’ve ended much more quickly, but honestly I’m glad it didn’t. I’m going to enjoy this. And so is Cullen.” Now he sounded almost amused.

“Give me just one more chance,” Evelyn pleaded.

“You've had enough chances, girl.” Cullen’s words were punctuated by a smack to her arse.

A surprised sound tore itself out of Evelyn’s mouth. What she felt the most was shock. She was not expecting that at this very moment. The next time Cullen’s palm connected with her flesh, she was ready for it, and she felt a strange pleasure rising out of the pain. She moaned, but caught herself, and pressed her lips together. The next slap did not come immediately after the previous one, leaving her waiting. When it came, the smack hit her other cheek, quickly followed by another. Her skin was tingling all over, and keeping any noises at bay was nigh impossible. A small whimper might have left her lips. Cullen spanked her two more times, and this time she couldn’t help it - she moaned.

“Are you going to tell us what we want to hear?” Alistair demanded.

“Yes. Yes, I am,” Evelyn told them hastily, even if part of her wanted to see how long they could keep that up, how much she could take before the pain became too much and overshadowed the pleasure. “I was touching myself.”

“Well, that’s precise,” Alistair commented sarcastically.

There was a series of three hard smacks on her backside, making her gasp.
“The king has no use for such talk. Get to the point, girl,” Cullen instructed.

Evelyn trembled on his lap. She didn’t know she could enjoy this so much. She was wet and desperate, and at this point she was ready to move this thing along to the part where they would touch her, make her come, and yet something in her urged her to continue this sweet torment.

In the end she decided to speak, and see what was going to happen.

“I was touching my… my cunt. And my breast. I was pleasuring myself,” she told them in a halting, timid voice.

“See? Was that so hard?” Alistair asked.

“I’m mildly disappointed,” Cullen said, his hand gently gliding over her arse. “I was hoping I could spank that pert arse of yours again. It’s turning a lovely shade of pink.” He kneaded the flesh, his thumb almost brushing against her entrance, making her whimper pathetically in need.

“I’ve told you what you wanted to hear. What’s going to happen to me now?” Evelyn questioned, making as if to get up, and felt Cullen tighten his hold on her, and laugh. She was truly overpowered and trapped.

“Did something gave you the impression that we were done with you?” Alistair asked her, his expression amused.

“No. I just thought that…”

“Well, you thought wrong. We are just beginning. The night is young, and we want to hear much more from you,” the king explained.

Evelyn opened her mouth to say something, and felt Cullen’s fingers digging into the flesh of her arse as if in warning.

“Are you going to talk back?” he asked.

“No, Ser.”

“Good girl,” Cullen praised, his thumb now definitely brushing along her folds, not giving her what she wanted, and only teasing her further.

“We got the ‘what’ but not the ‘why’ or the ‘who’,” Alistair observed. “So tell us, why were you pleasuring yourself on my throne?”

“I was… excited. I felt that need in my body,” she explained.

“And you couldn’t wait to get to your own chamber?” Cullen questioned.

“I share it with five other girls. It’s not exactly… private.”

“And the throne room of all places is intimate? I never thought of it that way. Have you, Cullen?” Alistair questioned in disbelief.

“Definitely not.”

“There are more rooms you clean. Why this one? Why do it on the throne?”

“I… I can’t say.” Evelyn looked down at the floor.
“Yes you can. You just don’t want to. Maybe you need some incentive. Cullen, if you’d be so kind.”

There were two sharp slaps to her arse and Evelyn groaned.

“There’s power in this room, in this throne. It’s exciting,” Evelyn confessed in a rush. “And what I did is forbidden, wrong. I knew I shouldn’t be doing it, and that made me want to do it more. I thought that no-one’s ever done something like that before, and I wanted to be the first.”

At her words Cullen’s hand drifted to her breast, gently toying with her nipple, rewarding her for her honesty.

“I hate to disappoint you, but you’re not the first person to pleasure yourself on that throne,” Alistair informed her casually.

“Your Majesty?!” She knew she sounded scandalised.

“You shouldn’t have told her that,” Cullen admonished.

“Who is she going to tell? Who would even believe her?” Alistair rolled his eyes. “But let’s forget that for a moment, and get back to you, Evelyn. You protested that you’re a good girl, but now you’ve told us how you like doing things that are wrong. Which is it then?”

Evelyn took a deep breath and looked Alistair square in the face.

“I want to be good, I try so very hard, but it’s not easy, I often fail. There is wickedness in me.”

“There was no doubt about that, but it’s good that you’re finally owning up to it,” Alistair told her. “So now for the last question. What were you thinking about?”

“I… uh…” Evelyn gazed intently at the floor. “Just me and… a man.”

Cullen spanked her hard.

“The truth. Out with it, girl. Don’t start lying again when you’ve been doing so well,” he instructed.

“I’m sorry, Ser. I won’t lie. I was thinking about men. Two men, touching me, kissing all over my body.”

“Wicked girl. One man’s not enough for you?” Alistair demanded again, amused.

“No, Your Majesty. It’s terrible and shameful and I’m sorry…”

“Hush,” the king quieted her. “Who were these men?”

“Just…” she begun to answer.

“Think long and hard about your next words. You’ve made me a promise,” Cullen reminded her, twisting her nipple roughly, making her gasp.

“You, it was you, the two of you!” Evelyn exclaimed. “I saw you here a few times, the king on the throne and the captain behind him, strong, powerful, handsome. I couldn’t stop my thoughts, couldn’t help myself. I’m sorry, I’m so sorry, I…”

She couldn’t finish her sentence because she was being lifted up, now made to sit on Cullen’s lap, her back against his chest.
“That’s an interesting turn of events.” Alistair smirked. “I think we need to hear some details.”

“Details?” Evelyn asked, her voice rising an octave.

“Yes, details. We must know just what kinds of things you imagined us doing, and what kind of punishment that merits,” Cullen growled into her ear, his stubble scratching against her neck.

“Punishment?” She was stuck asking one word questions.

“Yes. Such wickedness can’t go unpunished. But if you cooperate, we could be persuaded to be lenient,” the king assured.

“So you won’t tell anyone about all that? You won’t have me thrown out?” Evelyn asked excitedly.

“If you do exactly as we say you’ll be safe - no-one will know about your misdeeds, and your… position in this castle will be secured. Do we have an understanding?”

“Yes, Your Majesty.” Evelyn nodded her head frantically.

“Good, because I’d hate to see you go. Wouldn’t you Cullen?”

“That would be a shame. I’d like to keep her.” Cullen stroked a finger along her cheek. “I can see potential in you, girl. You won’t disappoint me, will you?”

“No, Ser. I’ll do no such thing,” she told him eagerly.

“That’s what I like to hear.” The smile was evident in Cullen’s voice. “Let’s get to it then. We must recreate what you were doing when we arrived.”

With that, he grabbed Evelyn’s skirt, which has fallen down as he had repositioned her, and lifted it back up, baring her from waist down. Alistair meanwhile strode up to them, grabbed her by the thighs, and spread her legs, placing one on the arm of the throne, and the other next to Cullen’s, so that his knee was keeping her open. He looked at her, tilting his head, as if in deep thought, and then reached for the neckline of her dress and yanked, ripping the garment open.

Evelyn gasped, her hands instinctively going up to cover herself, but Cullen swiftly grabbed her wrists, preventing her from doing anything, keeping her arms at her sides.

“It was my good dress,” she complained petulantly.

“Well, that’s just sad,” the king said, shaking his head. “If you’ll be good we’ll get you better dresses. Maybe even some undergarments, which you seem to be lacking. But you’re right, this dress is ruined. No use keeping it on you.”

Cullen let go of her wrists as Alistair dragged the garment down her body, throwing it to the side carelessly. Next he disposed of her shoes, and Evelyn found herself completely naked and spread out before two fully clothed men. She made another unsuccessful attempt to hide her body, but Cullen swiftly grabbed her wrists, preventing her from doing anything, keeping her arms at her sides.

“Don’t try that again or we’ll stop, and the whole deal will be off,” he warned her. “I suspect I’ll be needing my hands, so I can’t very well hold you like this.” Tightening the grip on her wrists, he lifted her arms up. “You’ll be holding on to the throne, and if you let go of it, we’ll be done. Do you understand, girl?”

“Yes, Ser, I understand completely,” Evelyn assured, grabbing the back of the throne.
Cullen let go of her wrists, trailing his fingers down the sensitive insides of her arms, her collarbones, and down to her breasts, which he cupped in his large palms. He didn’t touch her straining nipples, and Evelyn tried to move to force him to do that.

“I know what you want,” he murmured, his breath tingling over her neck. “But this is not about what you want, is it?”

Evelyn only sighed in frustration.

“Answer him with words,” Alistair urged, leaning closer to her. “Is this about what you want?”

“No, it’s not about what I want,” she conceded.

“What is it about then?” the king prompted.

“It’s about me doing what I’m told.”

“Good girl.”

Alistair’s hands went to her knees and that seemingly innocent touch send a shiver through her.

“Tell us then, what were you thinking about with your hand between your legs?” Alistair demanded, moving his fingers a bit higher.

“I…” She halted, took a deep breath, and continued. “I imagined myself on this throne, naked, wearing nothing but the royal crown and a heavy necklace and bracelets, dripping with jewels.”

Alistair’s hands were half way up her thighs, while Cullen’s fingers touched the edges of her areolas. “It was day, there were people gathered in the room, all of them stuck up nobles, watching me, wanting to scoff and criticize, but only able to stare.” Alistair’s hands were at the crease of her legs, framing her cunt, and Cullen’s finally captured her nipples.

“You were both there…” She hesitated for a moment, and there were fingers digging into the meat of her thigh and twisting her nipples harshly. “You were on your knees,” she went on, feeling the pain subside into tingly awareness. “You were kneeling before me, switching between kissing all over my body, sucking my nipples and licking at my cunt.”

Cullen’s lips were nuzzling against her neck, his fingers playing with her breasts. He was breathing hard against her, and his erection was digging into her arse, making her grind back against it.

Meanwhile Alistair brushed his fingers against her folds, not yet touching her where she needed it. Evelyn whined, bucking forward, still holding on to the throne, taut as a bowstring.

“Keep talking,” the king ordered.

“The people were watching us,” Evelyn picked up her narrative, and practically shouted as Alistair’s finger found the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex. “They could see all of me - my wet cunt, my bouncing tits, but they could also see you, working tirelessly on pleasing me.” Two of Alistair’s thick fingers entered her in a quick thrust, and Evelyn gasped. Cullen was biting at her neck and pinched her nipples. “And I looked back at them. They were scandalized and jealous and titillated. I had the king and his captain on their knees, and everyone knew, everyone saw.” The fingers touching her moved faster. “I’m so close,” she breathed out, and at the words it all stopped, and she sobbed. “Please, please, please,” she babbled, her nails digging into the throne, her body yearning for release. “I’m so sorry, please, so sorry, just…”

They resumed their actions, Alistair’s fingers thrusting inside her hard, while Cullen squeezed her breasts and pulled on her nipples. After all the buildup, the abrupt denial, and now this renewed
assault, she couldn’t take it anymore. With a prolonged moan, she came, no longer conscious of anything but the blinding pleasure coursing through her. Cullen and Alistair continued touching her, making the feeling last almost unbearably long.

When they finally allowed her to stop, she blinked her eyes open slowly, feeling boneless, like she would melt if Cullen wasn’t holding her. Her heart was racing and her limbs were heavy, but she kept on holding on to the throne.

“You can put your arms down,” Cullen told her, and she slumped down gratefully.

Evelyn laid like that for long moments, coming back down, smiling lazily, when all of a sudden she was being pushed off Cullen’s lap. She found herself on her knees on the floor, looking around in confusion.

“Well, well, well.” Alistair chuckled. “I was not expecting that. I didn’t actually believed I could be shocked, but you proved me wrong. That was quite something.” Evelyn started to get up, but he shook his head. “You stay where you are.”

Evelyn obediently sat back down on her haunches.

“I did not suspect the girl had so much perverse creativity in her,” Cullen commented. “It’s amusing, if depraved.”

“How she debauched us in her filthy little mind. Bringing her rightful king to his knees. And in front of the entire court no less.”

“Oh, and don’t forget that she usurped your power, stole your throne and crown, and some royal jewels as well.”

“I apologize, I…” Evelyn tried to interject.

Alistair stopped her with one imperial wave of his hand.

“You’ve said quite enough. Now it’s time for the injured parties to discuss some reparations.”

“I am yours to command,” Evelyn told them solemnly, bowing her head.

“How eager she is to follow the rules now.” Cullen chuckled. “Do you have any ideas as to what we should do with her, Your Majesty?”

“I might.”

Alistair stood right over Evelyn and grabbed her braid at the hairline, pulling at it, making her head tilt back. Her scalp tingled and she gasped, looking up at the king.

“What will you have of me?” she asked in a breathy voice.

“In your imagination you had us attend to your pleasure, so I believe the only fair way to settle this would be for us to use you for our own enjoyment,” Alistair explained. He kept a firm hold on her braid, and stroked his thumb over her slightly parted lips. “Would you agree with me, Cullen?”

“The king knows best.” There was a note of amusement in Cullen’s tone.

Evelyn was preoccupied with watching as Alistair started working on his belt buckle. His erection was straining the material of his breeches, and Evelyn trembled in his grasp, anticipating what was to happen.
“You’re not going to protest, girl?” Cullen asked her.

“As you’ve said, Ser, the king knows best. Who am I to question him? I know how terribly I have sinned. I will submit to his will, and yours. I’m heeding the warning you gave me, Ser, and I’m staying true to the promise I’ve made you,” Evelyn told him.

Alistair allowed her to turn her head so that she could look at Cullen over her shoulder. He looked very self-satisfied, his smirk making his scar draw tight.

“That’s what I like to hear,” he said.

Before she could respond, Alistair was yanking her head back around, and she found herself staring right at his thick cock. Evelyn licked her lower lip, and waited. Alistair smiled down at her, and guided her head to his erection. Keeping eye contact, Evelyn lapped at the bead of precome at the tip. She continued running her tongue over the head, until she felt Alistair tugging on her braid.

“Stop teasing the king, girl,” Cullen ordered. “That’s not the way to gain his forgiveness.”

Evelyn took the head into her mouth, sucking gently, making Alistair moan.

“That’s better,” Cullen commented. “He likes that.”

Evelyn made a questioning noise, but Alistair wouldn’t let her actually ask the question, instead prompting her to take more of him into her mouth. Alistair started guiding Evelyn’s movements as she bobbed over his cock, making her go as deep as she could, then pulling her away so that she could suck and lick at the head.

“You’re probably wondering how I might know that,” Cullen said. “Well, remember how the king mentioned that you were not the first person to pleasure yourself on that throne?”

She couldn’t very well answer with words, so Evelyn just hummed her agreement, which made Alistair shiver.

“I’m not sure Alistair here was the first to come up with that arguably brilliant idea, but he definitely did it before you. And I happened to catch him doing it,” Cullen recalled. “He was sitting there, his legs spread open, his cock out, looking like sin personified. He was surprised to see me there, but when the shock wore off, he kept touching himself, looking at me, and the only thing I could do was walk up to him and… help. I was afraid he would alarm the guards when I had him shouting for me.”

Evelyn moaned again around Alistair’s cock, and felt him tugging her completely off. She made a sound of protest, but he ignored her.

“You’re making her job too easy for her, Cullen,” Alistair complained. “With you talking like this and her sucking me off the way she is I would not last long.”

“Is she any good then?” Cullen wanted to know.

Evelyn’s head spun on its own accord. She looked at Cullen with narrowed eyes.

“Oh, our little maid doesn’t like her cocksucking skills being called into question,” Cullen chuckled.

“She could definitely give you a run for your money with that soft mouth and wicked tongue of hers.”
Evelyn gave Cullen an evil smirk.

“Let me judge her skills,” Cullen responded, ignoring Evelyn’s expression.

“By all means,” Alistair agreed magnanimously.

He let go of Evelyn’s braid, allowing her to fully turn around. She reached for Cullen’s knees, and moved herself closer to him. He was almost lying on the throne in a nonchalant pose, his head propped on his hand. Evelyn looked at him questioningly.

“Get to it, girl,” he told her impatiently. “You will suck my cock dry. You’ll take everything I have to give you.”

Hastily, Evelyn reached for his belt buckle and the fastenings of his breaches.

“You might be wondering what I and the captain were doing here at such an hour,” Alistair said, his tone light, conversational. “You weren’t expecting anyone, and neither were we. You see, after that accidental first encounter, we returned here often. This particular time Cullen was supposed to fuck me over that throne. You enjoy things that are wrong. Imagine this then - the king bent over his throne, fucked by his captain, grabbing the arms, trying not to scream, loving every second of it…”

Evelyn sighed, her hands still as she contemplated the image.

“Don’t distract her,” Cullen told Alistair sharply. “She has a task to perform.”

At his words, Evelyn return to what she was doing, pulling out his cock, and starting to run her hand over it.

“No nonsense, girl. Get to work,” Cullen urged.

Evelyn heeded his wishes, immediately diving in and taking as much of his cock as she could into her mouth, almost choking. She glanced up, and saw him looking at her.

“You’re a quick study,” he complimented, and those words filled her with pride. “I’m glad to see your assessment of her was not wrong, Alistair.”

“What a fortuitous discovery we’ve made,” the king commented. “I was so disappointed when I’ve heard that this pretty little thing was a good girl. I decided to leave her be, but she just fell into our hands, turning out to be wicked and talented. We’ll make good use of you, Evelyn. You won’t be scrubbing the floors anymore, but we’ll still keep you on your knees,” Alistair promised.

“I wouldn’t mind having her on her back as well,” Cullen said, running his large hand over Evelyn’s head and down to her shoulders.

“So many possibilities. Your new job might be even more exhausting than your current one, Evelyn.”

His words left her trembling. Alistair was standing right over her. She could feel his presence there, and then he was grabbing her by the hips, yanking her up. The change in position made her slightly unsteady, and so she grabbed Cullen’s thighs, and felt him holding her forearms, anchoring her in place. She dutifully continued moving her mouth over him.

“You worked her over well,” Alistair commented, his fingers grazing over Evelyn’s arse. “It is quite a lovely pink.”
Cullen let go of one of her hands and grabbing her braid, pulled her head up. Before she could ask why, she felt Alistair’s hand on her behind, making her shiver and dig her fingers into Cullen’s muscular thighs. There was another quick strike, and Evelyn whimpered. Her cunt felt empty, and she needed it to be filled. She was going to beg and she didn’t care.

“I’m getting the distinct feeling,” smack, “that she is,” smack, “enjoying,” smack, “her punishment,” Alistair observed as Evelyn continued making noises.

“I had the same impression,” Cullen agreed. “And isn’t that just twisted and perverse?”

Alistair spanked her again, and without thought, Evelyn started muttering “Please, please, please,” in a quiet yet desperate voice.

“Most definitely,” Alistair responded to Cullen’s question, ignoring Evelyn’s words. “But do you care at this point?”

Evelyn continued her litany of pleas, while Alistair roughly kneaded her arse.

“I don’t think I do. But wasn’t she saying something?”

“Please,” Evelyn moaned aloud.

“Please what?” Cullen demanded.

“Please, take me, use me, fuck me.” She sounded like a wanton harlot, and that was alright by her.

“There’s an idea - we could leave her here like this, needy and untouched,” Cullen suggested. Evelyn stiffened, her body going rigid with fear. “See how she reacts? That would be a real punishment.”

Evelyn was left speechless, waiting for Alistair's response.

“That it would. But wouldn’t we also be punishing ourselves? It’s a real conundrum.” There was a tense moment of silence, before Evelyn felt Alistair kicking her feet apart, and kneeling behind her. She almost sobbed with relief. “We could go back to our original plan for the evening, but now I really want to feel her wet cunt around my cock.”

With that he sheathed himself in one powerful thrust, forcing a groan from Evelyn.

“I think that’s a good decision for now,” Cullen concluded. “I want to come into that soft mouth of hers. Speaking of which - are you waiting for a formal invitation, girl?”

Without answering, Evelyn dove down to take his length back into her mouth, trying to find a rhythm as Alistair started fucking her in earnest.

“That’s good.” Cullen groaned. “I could not deny myself this. But some other time we could have her watching us, her hands tied behind her back, unable to touch herself, as we’d come over and over again.”

Evelyn made a disgruntled sound around his cock, which Cullen ignored, his hand heavy on the back of her neck.

“I like the way you’re thinking, Cullen,” Alistair agreed, his thrusts getting harder.

Strength was slowly leaving Evelyn’s body. She wasn’t sure how she was going to support herself, but feeling her weakness, Alistair tightened his hold on her hips, and Cullen grabbed his own cock in
his fist and started guiding her head with the other, freeing her hands and allowing her to hold on to
him. She was truly in their grasp now, pushed and pulled, not having to do almost anything besides
feel. Her knees ached and her jaw was tired but it was all beyond perfect.

“Just look at her,” Cullen said in a rough voice. “Letting us do anything we want. Isn’t that a gift?”

“A true miracle.” Alistair was pounding into her relentlessly. “A wicked, filthy miracle. So bad and
so good. Do you think she deserves to come?”

Evelyn worked her tongue on the underside of Cullen’s cock, tempting her gag reflex, wanting to
influence his answer.

“I’m feeling generous. Let her,” Cullen responded.

Hearing the words, Evelyn sighed, but that sound quickly turned into a muffled moan, when Alistair
touched her nub. She had already come this evening, but the second climax was building in her with
shocking speed. Seconds later she was toppling over the edge, the feeling overwhelming her.

Her immediate reaction dragged both men with her. She felt the warmth of Alistair spilling himself
inside her, and tried to swallow as Cullen’s seed spurted into her mouth. She was riding the waves of
her own pleasure, and felt theirs filling her. If they weren’t holding her, she would surely collapse
from the force of her orgasm.

When they were all done, Alistair pulled her back with him gently, making her sit. She felt like a
ragdoll, not able to move on her own, her breathing heavy and her muscles exhausted, but she was
perfectly contented in her afterglow.

Cullen slid down to the floor, and Alistair maneuvered himself and Evelyn closer to him. Both men
were propped against the throne, while Evelyn slumped between them, encircled by their arms. They
kissed her head and touched her gently.

“Are you alright, love?” Cullen asked, all traces of the domineering captain gone from his voice.

“Mmm-hmmm,” Evelyn hummed, a satisfied smile on her lips.

“Was everything to your liking? Did we overdo something?” Cullen continued his questioning.

“It was perfect,” Evelyn assured him, pressing her face to his chest.

“You must be absolutely honest with us. You won’t hurt our feelings,” Cullen went on, undeterred.

“You worry too much. Evelyn would’ve told us if something was wrong. She had her word, but she
didn’t use it,” Alistair told him.

“I just…”

“It was everything I wanted, and then some more,” Evelyn cut him off, yawning. She wasn’t sure
how she was going to make it to her chamber. Especially since… “My dress!” she exclaimed. “How
will I walk out?”

“Oh.” Alistair laughed. “There’s a secret passage behind that tacky golden drapery.”

“And you couldn’t have told us that before? Maybe so I wouldn’t have to sneak around the palace?”
Evelyn swatted at him halfheartedly.

“I wanted to add some more authenticity,” Alistair explained, grinning.
“I’ll give you authenticity,” Evelyn grumbled. “Try flattening yourself against the wall behind a statue of a, luckily very fat, ancestor of yours, avoiding being seen by an actual maid.”

“All’s well that ends well,” Alistair declared, still not concerned in the slightest. “You rogues can do all that.”

“Guess who’s carrying me up the stairs and massaging oil into my arse.” Evelyn looked at him through narrowed eyes.

“Did you seriously just say that like it’s a bad thing?” Alistair started laughing, and Cullen joined in. “Oh no, what fresh torture is this - having the beautiful woman I love in my arms and then touching her shapely behind,” the king mocked.

“I’m definitely glad I won’t have to suffer through such an ordeal,” Cullen added, failing at sounding serious.

“Why do I put up with you two?” Evelyn sighed.

“The sex?” they both answered at the same time.

“There was something about soul deep love, but sure - go with that.” Despite herself Evelyn laughed. “Now take me to bed before I fall asleep on the floor.”

Alistair got up, quickly made himself decent, and picked Evelyn up, cradling her in his strong arms. Cullen took off his cloak, and draped it around her.

“There better be cushions on every seat I take tomorrow,” Evelyn told them, as they started to walk.

“Were we too rough?” Cullen asked again, pulling back the drapery.

“No, darling. Once again, it was just like I envisioned it. It’s the natural consequence of our actions, of what I wanted,” Evelyn explained patiently. “And that’s the last we’ll speak of it again.”

“The last?” Alistair asked, as they moved up the stairs.

“Well…” Evelyn grinned. “That’s the last we’ll speak of any kind of worries about my behind. I might have some other ideas to discuss with you.”

Chapter End Notes

So... uh... let me know how I did?
The reward

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

The first ray of sun was poking through the space where the curtain wasn’t fully covering the window. Cullen thought about Alistair tugging at the curtain quickly before pulling him and Evelyn back into the room. It was still fairly early when they found their way to bed. It was the second to last night they could spend together. They tried to make the most of that time. There was something like desperation in all of them. They pretended to be carefree but they all clung together a bit tighter, a bit longer, not willing to let go.

They’d see each other soon enough, they’d figure something out. That was what they were telling each other. But what was ‘soon’ exactly? After a month together, a day apart seemed like an eternity.

He promised Alistair and Evelyn that he wasn’t going to worry during those last days, and so he tried to push the unpleasant thoughts aside, but at the same time Cullen was fairly certain that his lovers had their own moments of sorrow while thinking of their impending separation.

Alistair was going to have it the worst. Cullen and Evelyn were going to remain together, but he would stay behind, lonely in his huge castle. Cullen felt a pang of guilt. It was not fair that he’d get to be with Evelyn while Alistair lay by himself in his large and empty bed. But what could be done about it?

He ran his finger over Alistair’s shoulder, which was resting on his stomach, connecting the freckles, marveling at the myriad patterns there. Maker, but he loved that man. There was no longer any trace of panic in his mind at thinking those words. He loved a man, and not like a brother. He loved a man romantically and he was proud.

There was a mumbling sound coming from his other side, and Cullen turned his head to watch Evelyn blinking up at him sleepily. And he loved a woman too. A very disheveled, groggy woman. A perfect woman.

“Morning,” he whispered to her.

“I could hear you thinking. It woke me up,” she told him in a hushed tone.

“I’m sorry…”

“I’m joking. I can’t hear you thinking. I think my body’s gotten used to waking up at this nonsensical hour,” Evelyn explained. “But I can see now that you’ve been thinking. Stop it now.”

“I was just thinking that I love you.”

“Well, in that case, disregard my previous statement.”

Evelyn sat up a bit and pecked him on the lips, before stretching her arms over her head and getting out of bed. Cullen watched her collecting pieces of clothing strewn over the floor, her behind looking particularly tempting as she bend down.

“I would’ve thought you’d get used to the sight,” Evelyn told him, looking over her shoulder at him.

“No. It’s still as entrancing as the first time.”
Evelyn might have blushed a bit.

“There’s no time for that. Disentangle yourself from Alistair and let’s go.”

She threw his tunic and breeches at him, and set to dressing herself. None of that had any effect on Alistair who slept like the dead. Cullen didn’t even try to be very gentle with him, like he did the first time he had to get from under his sleeping king. Instead he grabbed Alistair’s arm and pushed him onto his back. There wasn’t even a change in Alistair’s breathing.

Cullen pulled the tunic over his head and wiggled into his breeches before joining Evelyn and helping her do up some stubborn buttons at the back of her dress.

“There’s a button or three missing,” he told her.

“And whose fault is that?”

“Alistair’s? I’m not sure.” Cullen chuckled, and stepped away to pull on his boots.

“You’re both incorrigible. My maid thinks I’m the clumsiest dresser in Thedas. She offered to come undress me several times.” Evelyn shook her head.

“You wouldn’t have us any other way.” Cullen tucked a strand of her hair behind her ear, smiling at her.

“How can you be so charming at stupid o’clock in the morning?”

“It comes easily with you.”

Evelyn rolled her eyes, but kissed him briefly.

“Time to go,” she announced, not making a move to go. She kept staring at Alistair, who was lying splayed on the bed, breathing steadily, the cover low on his hips.

“This separation won’t last forever,” Cullen said softly, placing his hand on her arm. This was her moment of sorrow, and Cullen knew he had to try and give her some hope, which he didn’t actually feel himself.

“You’re right.” She nodded and smiled up at him. The smile didn’t reach her eyes, but Cullen wasn’t going to call her out on it. Sometimes pretending was necessary.

Seeming to shake herself out of her thoughts, Evelyn walked up to the wall and performed the complicated series of taps which made a bookcase move away, leaving an opening to a narrow passage.

Cullen grabbed a candle, lit it, and passed it to Evelyn, who walked in first. He followed her, pulling the bookcase closed behind them. The passage was dark, cold and moist. The stale air with a hint of mold to it always made Cullen sneeze.

They wound their way through all the turns carefully, hearing the sound of their own steps echoing over the stones. There were quite a few places where the passage forked into several roads, and during the first week they had to use a map Alistair drew for them, but after a month they felt rather confident. They found their way to a small utility room in the guest wing without any trouble.

Evelyn blew out the candle and peeked out of the doors. When she slipped out, Cullen followed. There was still something a bit nerve wracking about sneaking around like that, but the passages
made it much easier than it would’ve been otherwise.

With a quick kiss, Evelyn left Cullen by his doors, walking to her chamber.

There were still some two hours before a servant would be by to wake Cullen up, but he didn’t feel like going back to bed. Some days he managed to doze off for a bit, but this particular day he knew he wouldn’t be able to do it. His mind refused to be quiet, making him think of all the things he shouldn’t. It annoyed him to no end how the worry for the future was making it all but impossible to enjoy the present.

With a frustrated sigh, he sat at his desk, and pulled a stack of letters from the drawer. Some of the most important correspondence was being forwarded to him from Skyhold. He also had a few proposals from local merchants and nobles to look over. Work always put his mind at ease, when it wasn’t making him mad. But he preferred being mad at an incompetent soldier to agonizing over his and Evelyn’s departure from Denerim.

He was mostly done when the servant came to inform him that breakfast was going to be served shortly. That was usually the extent of their exchange, but this time the servant told him that the king wished for him to wear something more formal. Cullen felt his brows drawing in confusion. What did Alistair have planned? The servant didn’t know the answer to that question, or was instructed not to divulge it.

Cullen used to hate surprises, but he was tentatively growing to enjoy them. Surprises required implicit trust from all parties to be successful, and he did trust Evelyn and Alistair completely. It also helped that from time to time he could be the one in on the secret. Planning things with Evelyn for Alistair was rather exciting. He preferred being in that position.

Control. That was it. He liked having his, felt secure with it, and trying to anticipate the unexpected was taking control away from him. But he could learn to give a bit of it up.

He should not philosophise, he decided. There was the rather pressing matter of his attire to attend to. He walked over to his bedroom, threw open the closet doors and stared at the row of jackets and breeches hanging there. He was no expert in fashion. Templars always wore the same armor, and after he gave that up, he replaced it immediately with his own personal uniform. It was efficient and comfortable to never wonder about what to wear.

But a king’s court was different than the circle or even Skyhold. In preparation for their visit, Evelyn ordered some new clothes made for him. At the time Cullen found it absurd, but now he understood why she did it. Denerim was much more relaxed than Val Royeaux, but a certain appearance was required. Maybe it was the simple boy born in Honnleath speaking through him, but he found the whole affair tedious and unnecessary. Yet he did his best, trying to remember all the rules. He’d never want to embarrass Alistair and Evelyn.

He squinted suspiciously at a light blue jacket with golden buttons, lifting it up to inspect it up close. He’d never pick such a color for himself, but Evelyn said it suited him, so it would have to do. And then there were the breeches. He shouldn’t be deliberating over this for so long. That was one thing he wouldn’t miss back in Skyhold. He could ask a servant to pick out his clothes, but this also felt somehow wrong to him. He was a grown man - he could dress himself.

Making a quick decision, he pulled out a pair of light breeches, shook off his old clothes, washed himself in the basin, and redressed. He suspected there was little time left, so he hurried down the corridor and down the stairs to the smaller dining room.

Alistair, Evelyn and a few courtiers were already seated at the breakfast table, talking quietly, not
eating - apparently waiting for him.

“Long night, Commander?” Evelyn asked lightly.

“Yes, well, I’m sorry for keeping everyone waiting.” Cullen bowed in the general direction of the table before taking a seat at Alistair’s left.

“So what kept you up so late?” the king asked, starting to butter a roll.

Cullen restrained himself from glaring at his lover. He and Evelyn both loved teasing him like this, saying something that on the surface sounded innocent, and in truth was anything but. Sometimes it made him very nervous, worried that someone was going to catch on to them. Yet other times he found himself doing the same thing. They were a very bad influence on him.

“I was hard at work. Some things required my thorough attention,” he responded, smiling at Alistair pleasantly.

There was something enjoyable in seeing the almost disappointed yet impressed expression on the king’s face.

“We do know how diligent at your work you are,” Evelyn chimed in. “You won’t rest until you’ve exhausted all possibilities and reached a satisfactory conclusion to the problems you’re facing.”

He couldn’t outdo her, so instead Cullen just inclined his head to her, and turned his attention to the cold meats. He knew that would be enough. Now they set to eating in peace.

“What’s the plan for today?” Cullen asked when they were done.

“I do believe my quartermaster had some matters she wished to discuss with you,” Alistair told him.

Cullen felt his eyebrows raising. Meeting with a quartermaster? Alistair wanted him to spend their last full day together in a meeting? Why would he then suggest Cullen wear something particularly elegant?

This was a ruse of some kind. There was no doubt in Cullen’s mind. Alistair wanted him distracted, away from something big. But what could that be?

He opened his mouth to ask the question, but quickly closed it again. There was no point in asking. He wouldn’t find out.

“Of course, I shall find her right away,” he just said.

Alistair and Evelyn both looked surprised that he didn’t protest or question them further.

“I will see you at dinner then, I suppose?” Cullen ask in parting.

“Certainly,” Evelyn agreed.

Cullen bowed lightly to them, before exiting. It was satisfying to shock them, to partially win at their game, even if he still didn’t know what they were planning.

Just as he said, Cullen walked over to the quartermaster’s office. It seemed she wished to have his opinion on a certain up and coming master smith from Orzammar, who was doing some rather innovative things with new alloys he created. Cullen’s recruits did try the weapons created from the alloys, with varying results, and so Cullen found himself explaining everything to the quartermaster, going into more and more detail, when she questioned him. He was so engrossed in his task, that
when a servant interrupted him, he had no idea how much time has passed.

“Apologies.” The young man bowed. “If you would follow me, Commander. The king requires your presence.”

That was it then. Cullen was about to find out what Alistair and Evelyn came up with this time. He felt more excitement and less worry at the prospect of the unknown than he would’ve just a few months earlier. They truly did change him.

With a bow to the quartermaster, he followed the servant. He wasn’t sure what he was expecting, but as they made their way to the center of the palace, he felt more and more confused. When they reached the doors to the throne room, he was at a loss. They did manage to make some creative use of the room, but he was fairly certain that in the middle of the day, with a servant leading him there, there was no chance of anything remotely close to that happening again.

The servant stepped aside, and the two guards at the doors started pulling them open. The low sound of dozens of people trying to whisper politely was the first thing Cullen noticed. Then the doors fell open completely, and a silence descended on the room. Everyone turned to stare at him. Cullen was not unused to being gawked at by nobles, but it still unnerved him.

What were they doing there? What was he doing? And maybe most importantly - what was he supposed to do?

At the far end of the large chamber, Alistair stood before his throne. From this distance Cullen couldn’t be sure, but he thought he saw him smile. That was all the encouragement he needed. He took the first step, and then another, striding between the rows of nobles with as much confidence and dignity as he could muster. He was walking towards Alistair, trying not to care about the rest.

Evelyn was nowhere to be seen, but he expected he’d find her in the first row. Was he meant to join her for some sort of ceremony? But if that were the case, why would he have to be paraded through the entire room?

One step at a time, he pushed on, trying to remind himself that he trusted his lovers, that they knew what they were doing, that they’d let him know what to do.

He did notice Evelyn at the very front, when he reached it. She smiled at him and made the smallest motion with her head, indicating that he should walk on, and so he did, climbing the few steps to the dais.

Despite all his faith in them and their plan, Cullen felt his heart rising to his throat. What was going to happen to him in the sight of all those people?

He stopped a respectful distance before Alistair, and bowed to him. The king smiled, but didn’t say anything to him. Instead he addressed the crowd.

“Lords and ladies of Ferelden, Lady Inquisitor, I have gathered you all here to witness a very important event.” His voice was as kingly as Cullen’s ever heard it, and there was something reassuring about that. He listened with rapt attention. “Before me stands a native son of Ferelden. A man who is a credit to his homeland. A man who played a large part in saving us all from certain doom. A great man. A hero.” Cullen felt proud and confused all at the same time, and waited with bated breath for Alistair’s next words. “He deserves our gratitude. Our respect. Our reverence.” Alistair was looking over the room, as if trying to dare the nobles to defy him, but at the last words his gaze focused on Cullen. “I should have done this much earlier,” he said, almost apologetically. “Kneel.”
Cullen felt a momentary shock, before understanding dawned on him. He should have stopped this, said something about the Orlesians, about the implications of what was about to happen, but he didn’t. Almost all on their own, his knees buckled, and he sank down to the floor. Alistair placed his hand on his head, and the touch was both familiar and foreign.

“In the name of Calenhad the Great,” Alistair started, “in the sight of the Maker,” his eyes turned upwards before focusing back on Cullen, “I declare you a knight of Ferelden.” The king tried to look serious, but the corners of his mouth were twitching up. “Rise and serve your land, Ser Cullen.”

Those words. Ser Cullen. They sounded so strange. Could it truly be?

Alistair offered him a hand, and Cullen took it, getting back up. Before he could move away, Alistair pulled him in, his arm going over Cullen’s shoulder in what was probably an official embrace.

“I love you,” he whispered in his ear. “But that’s not why I’m doing this. You deserve it.”

They parted, and all Cullen could do was stare dumbly at his lover. He still couldn’t quite believe it all. Was this some kind of a bizarre dream he was going to wake up from at any moment?

With a gentle touch, Alistair turned him to face the room, and the first thing Cullen saw was Evelyn clapping enthusiastically and beaming at him. He smiled back feebly, noticing just then that the entire crowd was clapping. The nobility of Ferelden made to applaud a man that came from nothing. He thought he didn’t care about what they thought or whispered of him, but now he realized that it was not entirely true. He had nothing to prove to them, and still it pleased him to know that even if they did not truly respect him, they’d still have to act differently around him from this day on.

He wished his sister could see him in that moment. She’d burst with pride, he was sure of it. The idea of writing about it to her made him happy.

“Ser Cullen, I think we should proceed to the dining hall - there is to be a feast in your honor,” Alistair told him, very clearly enjoying using that title.

Cullen just nodded, and followed him down the dais. Evelyn joined them, a brilliant smile still on her face.

“Ser Cullen,” she murmured. “I think it suits you well.”

“And you’re fine with it?” Cullen asked, at last able to voiced the worries that were gnawing at him. “The Orlesians will…”

“…have to deal with that for the time being. And then… Then we can tell the lot of them to go take a trip to the Fade, and do what we want.”

It was a simplistic answer, something Josephine and Leliana would scoff at, but Cullen couldn’t help being somewhat comforted. Evelyn made that decision with Alistair, and even if she were influenced by her feelings, he knew she’d still thought about it carefully, calculated the benefits and drawbacks, and decided that it was worth it.

She was right - the Inquisition wasn’t going to last forever, but his title would remain, to remind him in his darkest moments that he was worth something, that he achieved something, that for once he made a difference for the better.

They walked through the castle in silence, the nobles following them at a distance.

“Are you glad we did this?” Alistair questioned after a time, probably worried by Cullen’s silence.
“If you think it’s right…” Cullen started.

“No. This is not the question,” Evelyn interjected. “Are you glad? We can’t undo it, but you must be honest with us.”

They were both scared they had displeased him, and Cullen never wanted them to feel that way. If he were not to worry about the political implications of what just happened, he’d be… happy. And proud.

“I am, I very much am,” he answered, feeling a genuine smile spreading on his face.

“Good,” Evelyn and Alistair said, almost at the same moment, and laughed, clearly relieved.

“Let’s eat then, and later I can show you just how happy I am. There may be some more kneeling involved,” Cullen told them in a low voice, feeling bold.

“We should’ve done this in the evening.” Alistair sighed.

Cullen agreed, but at the same time he wanted to enjoy this public celebration. Maybe it was petty of him, but he wished to keep watching the disgruntled face of the Bann who tried to embarrass him during his first dinner in Denerim.

Nothing would beat the carnal pleasure he was going to experience tonight, but there was also pleasure in seeing an adversary beaten. Even if he didn’t achieve this particular victory by himself, or by using a sword, he would still cherish it.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so glad I finally got to this part. Making Cullen happy is one of my writing priorities. It's up there with making awful puns, so you can understand just how strongly I feel about it.

Next chapter we're getting back to Skyhold, before taking another trip. Interesting things are bound to happen.

As always, thank you for reading. If you're enjoying yourself consider leaving me a comment or kudos.
The invitation

Chapter Notes

The world seems like a pretty terrible place right now. I'm particularly sorry for all of you in the US. It's not much, but here, have some terrible puns and bondage - maybe it will take your mind off of things for a few moments.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Where did the time go? Evelyn wondered. They were just standing in this very courtyard, smiling and whispering, excited about spending a month together. And now she and Cullen were leaving. How was that possible?

They weren’t quite looking at each other, all battling the same sadness, fearful that if they shared a glance, the unwelcome tears would come. They had to maintain appearances, and crying would definitely look suspicious.

The real, honest, private goodbyes were said the previous night, in Alistair’s chamber, but still they’d have to say something now. Evelyn could feel the eyes of the courtiers on them, hear the horses restlessly neighing and digging their hooves into the ground. People and beasts alike waited for them to be done, and yet they stood still and silent.

“We’ll see each other soon,” Cullen started. His voice was strained. ‘Soon’ sounded like a lifetime, the way he said it.

“Of course. Very soon,” Alistair agreed in a somber tone.

“And in the meantime we’ll write,” Evelyn offered, her voice breaking slightly.

Damn her, damn them, and most of all damn politics and propriety. Saying goodbye to Alistair the last time was bad enough, but this time it was downright heartbreaking. If each parting was going to be harder than the previous, then she didn’t want to envision the next one.

They stood around awkwardly a few more moments.

“We’ll be leaving then,” Cullen declared.

“Yes.” Alistair nodded his head. “Just… be careful, I guess. Don’t get kidnapped or anything.”

Evelyn choked out a laugh.

“I’m not sure you’ve heard, but we’ve defeated a giant ancient evil not very long ago. I think we’ll be safe from some bandits,” she told him. “But you stay safe.”

“Oh, you know, a good kidnapping might be a pleasant diversion. I’m going to need something exciting to occupy my lonely, lonely days. And nights,” Alistair responded with a smirk.

“You two making jokes and being… cute isn’t helping,” Cullen complained.

“I’m sorry,” Evelyn and Alistair apologized almost simultaneously.
“Don’t be sorry. Just… Let’s just go before I do something foolish.”

“If someone were to be foolish, it would probably be me, but I agree - you better go,” Alistair said.

He looked at them in turn, nodding, and the brave face he was trying to put on was making Evelyn want to cry even harder. She didn’t even have the heart to remind him not to insinuate he was the one who always acted foolishly.

Almost as if on command, they all turned around, facing their separate directions. Evelyn’s legs were heavy as she took one step and then another, the distance between her and one of the man she loved growing.

Finally, she got on her horse and made for the gate. She was determined not to look back, and yet her head turned, as if of its own accord. Alistair was standing at the top of the stairs leading to the palace, his eyes trained on them. Evelyn glanced at Cullen, and saw him looking back as well.

“We’re such sentimental fools,” she said. She wanted to sound mocking, but didn’t succeed.

“That we are.”

Their horses knew to walk along the road, and carried them forward without being steered, as Evelyn and Cullen kept staring back. They looked ahead only when the gates fell shut behind them with a resonant, unpleasantly final sound.

They rode in silence for a while. Evelyn gripped the reins tightly, and pressed her lips together. She would not cry now. It was worth it. Every moment they shared together was worth this pain.

“You know, we can change our clothes, put on masks, and turn back to kidnap him ourselves,” Cullen told her, breaking her out of her thoughts.

“Who’s being funny and cute now?” Evelyn accused, laughing.

“I guess it’s rubbing off on me.”

“Rubbing is the right word.” Evelyn smirked.

“You’re truly a special woman - you can be both sentimental and crass, all in the space of a few minutes.”

“One of my many charms,” Evelyn retorted. “We’ll make it, won’t we?” she asked after a moment, not able to remain lighthearted.

“We will, my love, we will.”

She had to believe that.

Being back at Skyhold was strange. Over the years it’s become Evelyn’s home, but as cliche as it sounded, home was where her heart was, and hers was divided. One part of it remained by her side, but the other was miles away.

She couldn’t change that, so she tried to keep busy, to distract herself. Cullen needed that as much as she did, so Evelyn was glad that they had a war table meeting planned the morning after they returned.

Josie was still at her desk, sorting through her correspondence, so Evelyn, Cullen and Leliana
walked into the war room to wait for her there.

Cullen immediately turned to the map, studying the various statuettes placed on it, while himself being studied by Leliana. Evelyn knew there was trouble afoot when she noticed Leliana smirking.

“Soooo, Cullen, how was it, bending a knee for the king?” the Spymaster asked in a deceptively casual tone.

Cullen’s head snapped up from the map. His face was already starting to redden.

“How come?” he hissed.

“Getting knighted. Was it everything you thought it was going to be?” Leliana wanted to know, looking like innocence personified.

“I know you know,” Cullen told her, crossing his arms over his chest.

“Oh?” Leliana lifted one perfect eyebrow.

“I know you know what we... that we...” Cullen stammered, unable to finish his sentence. “You know.”

Evelyn wondered if it wouldn’t be prudent to intervene, but she kind of wanted to see where this was going to go.

“What exactly do you think I know?” Leliana demanded. “I’m the spymaster, I know a great many things. You’re going to have to be a bit more specific.”

“I’m not having this discussion with you. Just know that I understand your jokes, and I don’t appreciate them.”

The scowl on Cullen’s face was precious.

“Someone's touchy,” Leliana observed.

“He sure is. Very touchy, that one,” Evelyn chimed in, grinning.

“Evelyn!” Cullen exclaimed. “Don’t encourage her!”

“I have no idea what our dear Commander is so frazzled. Do you, Inquisitor?”

“Not the foggiest.”

“Whose side are you on, Evelyn?” Cullen demanded.

“Jealous, Commander?” Leliana teased. “I’d think a man in your particular position would not be prone to such emotions.”

“That’s not how... Oh, never mind. I’m ending this conversation. Now.” Cullen treated them to his patented ‘Stern Commander’ expression.

“But we were having such a pleasant little chat.” Leliana practically pouted. “Not much of a conversationalist, are you? I guess you must be accomplished at other things.”

Cullen remained pointedly silent, while Evelyn winked at Leliana. She should not tease him so, but sometimes it was just too much fun.
Just before the silence could become too tense, Josephine burst through the doors.

“I’m terribly sorry. I’m running a bit late today. My sister wrote to me with another harebrained scheme, and I got a bit carried away while responding.”

“Not to worry.” Evelyn smiled at her. “Let’s get down to business then.”

“Right.” Josephine nodded, looking over her agenda. “Did you make some kind of headway in your discussions in Denerim?”

Evelyn couldn’t help laughing, and heard Leliana chuckle discreetly. Cullen on the other hand was glaring, turning an interesting shade of red.

“Why are you…?” Josephine looked confused for a moment. “Oh! I understand.” She smiled slyly. “So, did you all have fun?” she asked, looking at Cullen in particular.

“I am not doing this. I’ll leave you, so you can maybe regain some composure and act like professionals.”

With a dramatic flourish of his coattail, Cullen stalked away from the table, and out of the room.

Evelyn meant to stop him, but as she opened her mouth, only laughter came out. She was starting to feel bad, but couldn’t help herself.

“He’s so uptight,” Josephine observed. “I would have been impressed if you got him into bed yourself, but to involve another man as well... How did you do it?”

“Chess and puppies - works like a charm.”

“That’s rather… unconventional.”

Evelyn just shrugged.

“So, Josie, I’m guessing Leliana let you in on our secret?”

“I’m sorry, Evelyn.” Josephine wrung her hands, looking a bit embarrassed. “We shouldn't gossip about your love life, but...”

“It’s fine. I know Leliana wouldn’t share this information with anyone untrustworthy. It should be our decision who to tell about us, but considering the favor Leliana did for us, I’m inclined to forgive her.”

“You’re very magnanimous, Inquisitor.” Leliana inclined her head.

“I’m very happy for all of you,” Josephine said.

“I… Thank you. You sound like you mean that.”

“But of course I do!”

“You’re not… judging us?” Evelyn asked tentatively.

“Come now, do you truly think this is such a rare and unheard off situation?”

“As a matter of fact, I do.” Evelyn laughed nervously.
“People, especially the nobility, pursue all kinds of arrangements, some more honest than others, and yours is the most genuinely moving I’ve heard of.” Josephine smiled, and Evelyn felt warm inside.

“It’s shocking how accepting you all are. It’s nice to be able to talk about it, to share my happiness.”

“We care for you all,” Leliana said. “Cullen might doubt it, with all my teasing, but I want nothing but the best for all of you. I’ve known Alistair for over ten years, and nothing has ever made him happier than the two of you. He never wanted the crown, it lies heavily on his head, but you make it better. And I believe he’s good to you as well.”

“We’re good for each other,” Evelyn agreed.

“We will keep your secret,” Josephine promised. “The world would not be kind to you. Your position would suffer if the details of your relationship were to surface.”

“Most definitely. I’m not sure who would have it the worst - the whore of Andraste or the king who…” Evelyn noticed Josephine’s displeased expression, and restrained herself. “I’ll stop being crass now. I’m sorry.”

“That’s quite alright.”

“In that case I’ll go find Cullen. I think he’ll be fine as long as we keep it professional. At least for this meeting.”

The Spymaster and Diplomat nodded their agreement.

“Before I go…” Evelyn stopped at the doors. “Thank you, Leliana. Truly. We had an amazing time, and without your help it would not have happened.”

“It was my pleasure. It would be worth it just so that I could make Alistair and Cullen squirm.”

Evelyn couldn’t fault her for that. It was a pastime she herself enjoyed thoroughly.

They were in Cullen’s office, some days later, going over the weekly scout reports, when a servant brought in a new batch of letters. On the very top laid the first letter from Alistair since their separation. As soon as the servant was gone, Cullen was ripping off the seal, while Evelyn sat on the edge of his desk, waiting impatiently.

“Dearest Evelyn and Cullen,” Cullen started reading. “Sadly, I have not gotten kidnapped yet, and am currently entertaining some new guests. I’d much prefer being tied up by some mercenaries to this, but fate hasn’t been kind to me.”

They both laughed.

“The kidnapping ideas has stuck with him, it seems,” Cullen observed.

“Yee-ees,” Evelyn agreed, rolling the word around in her mouth.

“I know that voice.” Cullen peered up at her curiously. “You’re getting an idea.”

“You’re very perceptive. I am getting an idea.” Evelyn grinned. “Remember what fun we had with my last idea?”

Cullen nodded, both smirking and blushing, which had to be some kind of achievement.
"The next time we’re together, we may play another game like this, only a bit more…"

"Intense?" Cullen supplied.

"Exactly."

"And what do you have in mind?"

Evelyn could see the spark of interest in Cullen’s eyes. That repressed Chantry boy she met at Haven was gone. In his place there was a confident man who still blushed, but was eager to try new things and push his own boundaries. She was proud that she and Alistair were the causes, and the beneficiaries, of that change.

“He wants to be kidnapped? We’ll kidnap him. He wants to be tied up? We’ll tie him up. He wants to lose control? We’ll take it from him.” She could feel herself grinning dangerously, and noticed a similar expression on Cullen’s face.

“I like the way you’re thinking,” he said, leaning forward, his fingers steepled before his smirking mouth.

“You may not like the next part,” Evelyn warned. “We’ll need Bull’s help.”

Cullen’s face twisted miserably, and Evelyn chuckled.

“Don’t worry, I’ll just send him a letter, asking for some instructions on proper binding. It’s truly a shame he and Dorian had to leave Skyhold. A live demonstration could be very beneficial.”

Cullen pulled another face.

“I’m rather glad they’re not here at the moment. Maker’s breath, Bull’s going to be so terribly pleased that we’re taking him up on his offer.”

“Oh, let him. As payment for helping us.”

“All right then.” Cullen sighed heavily. “But how do you wish to proceed after that? Reading his instructions won’t be enough…”

Evelyn bit her lip, feeling a new wave of excitement wash over her.

“I think it would be prudent if you practiced… on me.”

She’s been thinking about that for some time now. It was something she’s never done before, but that intrigued her. With Cullen and Alistair she felt safe enough to explore that. She was wondering how to bring the topic up, and now it just came up almost by accident.

Cullen had to enjoy the thought as well. Evelyn could practically see the ideas chasing one after another through his mind.

“I think that sounds like a very sound and strategic proposal.”

“Oh, don’t downplay this. You’re thinking of all the things you’ll do to me once I’ll be helpless in your grasp.”

“Who says you’re not in my grasp now?”

With shocking speed Cullen was up on his feet, grabbing Evelyn’s hands, pushing them behind her
back, holding both her wrists with one hand, and looming over her. A strangled moan tore itself out of Evelyn’s mouth.

“Point taken,” she breathed out. “And speaking of taking…” She spread her legs shamelessly, pushing her chest forward in invitation.

“We shouldn’t. The doors are not locked.”

“Stupid doors.” She let out a frustrated breath. “But you’re right. We also should finish Alistair’s letter, and promptly respond with our brilliant suggestion.”

Cullen let go of her wrists, and sat back down.

“But you’ll come and see me later in my room?” Evelyn asked, batting her eyelashes.

“Don’t you worry about that,” Cullen responded. “Now where were we? Right. ’I’ll be a good host, but with your visit fresh in my mind, it’s hard not to compare…”’

That day Evelyn wrote a carefully worded response to Alistair’s letter, and another letter to Bull. Alistair’s return letter, which arrived relatively quickly, was full of, equally carefully worded, enthusiasm. Bull’s letter in turn was a long time coming, but when it did come, it was accompanied by a large package, and carried by a messenger who would only hand it over to Evelyn personally.

She carried the delivery right to Cullen’s office, and locked the doors behind herself.

“It’s here,” she announced with a grin, dropping the package on Cullen’s desk, where it landed with a thud.

Cullen started tearing the paper open, while Evelyn opened the letter, scanning it quickly.

“He is extremely pleased,” she told her lover. “Oh…” She laughed. “He thinks you’ll be the one tied up.”

Cullen rolled his eyes.

“He probably just wrote it to get a raise out of me.”

“Maybe. But with Bull you never know. Perhaps he really thinks that.” Evelyn laughed, and noticed Cullen’s skeptical expression. “I did wonder about it though - you’re so very in charge at all times. Doesn’t it get tiring? I enjoy that on occasion, but it’s great to let go, to let someone else take charge. Did you never want to try that? You’re great at what you do, don’t get me wrong, but I don’t want you to feel like you’re forced to always be the commander.”

“I…” Cullen hesitated. “I never thought about that. I rather enjoy being in control, and letting go of that doesn’t feel appealing. I understand it on a theoretical level, but when it comes to me personally, I would not choose that.”

“That’s perfectly alright. Just know that if you ever want something, all you have to do is ask.” Evelyn reached out to squeeze his hand. He looked a bit nervous then, and she regretted starting that line of conversation.

“I never wondered why that is,” Cullen mused. “You and Alistair have so many responsibilities, have to be in charge of things all the time, so it makes sense that you’d like a reprieve. But then again I’m in a similar position, and feel no desire to change that. I think I always strove to be in control, in
all things, but after…” He paused, and his lips twisted. Evelyn wanted to tell him that he didn’t have to go on, but he started talking before she could. “After everything, from Kinloch Hold to Kirkwall, and my struggle with lyrium, I find comfort in knowing everything, anticipating everything, controlling everything. I can’t stand the idea of being powerless or dependent on something outside of my control.”

He was back there, returning in his mind to all those dark moments. Evelyn felt stupid for saying anything. She should’ve predicted that reaction, and not caused him pain.

“I’m sorry,” she whispered, grabbing both his hands in hers.

Cullen shook his head and gave her a small smile.

“That’s alright. I think that was something I always understood on some level. That’s the same reason why I hate surprises. Or hated them. You two taught me to be more open minded.” He tilted his head, as if contemplating something. “I trust you two. Maybe one day I could try to let go, to put myself in your hands.”

“You don’t have to. The most important thing is for you to be comfortable,” Evelyn insisted. “I only mentioned that because I enjoy it, and wondered if you wouldn’t. I don’t want you to think that it’s something I want of you…”

“I wouldn’t be doing that for you. I’d be doing that for myself. To prove to myself that my past has no hold on me, that I can let go, lose control, trust completely, without restraint.”

He looked hopeful now, and Evelyn exhaled in relief.

“Good. That’s good. If you’ll ever want that, just say the word.”

“I will.” He nodded. “But right now let’s open that impressive looking book Bull send us, and see what we can do to you.”

With one decisive movement, Cullen grabbed Evelyn by the hips and pulled her to sit on his lap. That was the end of that discussion, she supposed. That was fine by her. They ended at a positive note, and now could get back to the original purpose of their meeting. She kissed Cullen on the cheek, and reached for the book on his desk. It was a heavy, expensive looking, leather bound tome. She opened it on a random page, and gasped in shock.

“That’s… That’s complicated,” she muttered.

She kept staring at the, arguably beautiful, drawing of a woman hanging suspended from a hook on a ceiling, her arms and legs pulled back.

Cullen was silent for a moment.

“Is this what you had in mind?” he asked cautiously.

“That’s a bit much for me,” Evelyn told him.

“That’s good. I’m not sure I could do that. And asking for a hook to be installed in your room would be rather suspicious.”

Evelyn laughed. That darling man. He was a bit uncomfortable, she could tell, but she knew that if she really wanted to do something of that sort, he’d try his best to please her.
“I wasn’t thinking of something that elaborate. I’d prefer to retain some sort of mobility. I imagined it would just be my hands, maybe my legs, at most,” she clarified.

“I can do that, I’m sure. But we should probably look for that at the beginning of the book.” Cullen started flipping to earlier pages. “Maker’s breath!” he exclaimed, with a page half turned between his fingers. “Do you think Bull imagined I would be the one in such a state?”

Evelyn laughed heartily.

“Perhaps.”

“I again regret giving him so much knowledge about our… activities.”

“Maybe you won’t regret it so much later today.”

Evelyn took the pages from his hand, and flipped them.

“This.” She pointed to a particular drawing. “Nice and simple.”

She turned her head to gauge Cullen’s reaction, and saw him smiling.

“I like it.” He reached out and traced the drawing with a finger. “I’ll study those instructions now, and I’ll be by at your chamber later in the afternoon.”

Now he looked very intent, almost the same as when he studied geological charts or schematics of troop movements.

“I’ll be waiting impatiently,” Evelyn promised.

“I can imagine.” He shot her a quick, confident and entirely disarming grin. “So now you better go. I need time to familiarize myself with this.” Reluctantly, Evelyn got up from his knees. “The first time won’t be very quick, I’m afraid, so everything else will have to be more efficient. I want you naked on your bed when I arrive.”

It may have served a practical purpose, but his words made her pulse beat faster. It was always a thrill to hear him give orders like this.

“I better leave before I throw that book across the room and start getting naked now,” Evelyn said. They stared at each other for a while, their gazes heated, before they snapped out of it. Evelyn made for the doors, while Cullen focused on the book.

The next hours were going to be torturously long, Evelyn knew.

As she bounded up the stairs to her room, Evelyn felt giddy. Cullen was soon going to join her, and she couldn’t wait.

She looked at her bed and smiled. What a good decision she’s made not buying one of those bulky Orlesian beds, instead opting for one with a latticework headboard, practical for pulling ropes through it, even if that was not something she considered while contemplating the purchase.

With a shake of her head, she snapped back from the self-congratulatory thoughts. She had to get ready, so she started working on the laces at the back of her dress. It was a bit disappointing, not having Cullen watching her every movement, greedy for every bared patch of her skin. Still, she knew he had to be thinking about what she was doing. He was the one to order her to do it, and now
had to be sitting at his desk, imagining her disrobing.

The dress hit the floor at last, and was soon joined by the petticoat and undershirt. The shoes and knickers were next. Evelyn wondered briefly if she should keep her corset on, but in the end disposed of it, remaining only in her stockings.

Standing practically naked in the middle of her room, waiting for her lover to come in and tie her up, Evelyn felt brazen and excited. As a final touch she took out the pins holding her updo, and shivered as her hair grazed her back.

How should she arrange herself?, she wondered. On her side? On her back? No. Inspiration struck, and she knelt on the bed, legs slightly parted, hands in front of herself, pressed together.

Her uneven breathing sounded strangely loud in the empty room. She was alone still, nothing has happened, but just thinking about it, she felt herself getting wet. She closed her eyes to savor the images, smiling idly.

Moments passed, and her imagination was not enough. Cullen was late, she felt it. A desire to touch herself arose. She should wait, she knew, but the wait was turning unbearable.

Almost unbiddned, her hand drifted down her stomach, over her curls, finally dipping between her wet folds. She sighed at the sensation, as her fingers lightly played over her flash. Her other hand moved to her hardened nipple, tugging at it.

When she heard the doors opening downstairs, she felt relief. Her own touch was nothing compared to Cullen’s.

“I’m so sorry,” Cullen called to her, as he moved quickly up the stairs.

Her first instinct was to place her hands back in front of herself, pretend like she was waiting for him patiently, but then she thought better of it. She closed her eyes, and continued her languorous movements.

“I hope you don’t mind too much. I’ve had a bit of trouble picking…”

From the way his voice wavered and halted, Evelyn knew he must have reached the top of the stairs and seen her there. Slowly, she opened her eyes, smiling at him, still not stopping what she was doing.

“Evelyn.” That one word sounded stern, with a hint of warning. Evelyn shivered. She loved seeing the precise moment when Cullen slipped into this commanding persona, so similar yet distinct from his ordinary behavior.

“Yes?”

“What do you think you’re doing?”

He strode over to the bed, hovering over her.

“If I have to explain this to you, then we may have a problem,” she teased.

“I told you to wait for me, not to start without me.”

He grabbed her hands, yanking them forward. His fingers were bare, warm and calloused on her skin. He wasn’t wearing gloves anymore, and his armour was gone. It was a change he’s instituted
soon after they returned from Denerim. Publicly Cullen insisted that in times of peace it was just not necessary for him to be dressed as if for battle every day, but Evelyn knew that in truth it was her complaints about all that metal digging into her that made him reconsider his attire.

Now she twisted her fingers, trying to brush them against his bare wrist, and felt Cullen's grip tighten, not permitting her to more. He transferred her wrists into one hand, holding them hard.

“You won’t be touching anything now,” he informed her.

He pulled a neatly coiled rope from one of the cavernous pockets of his coat. Evelyn always knew those had to be useful for something.

“You’ll hold your arms like this,” he instructed.

“Will I now?” It was all she wanted to do, but they both enjoyed that back and forth, the push and pull, their wills clashing.

“Yes, you will. Unless you want me to leave.”

“You wouldn’t,” she told him defiantly. “You want this too much. You want me here at your mercy, spread out before you, naked and needy.”

“But you want it too.” He threw the rope on the bed, and with his free hand he reached between her legs, a single finger sliding between her drenched folds. “You couldn’t wait for me.” His finger grazed her nub lightly, and Evelyn moaned. “So what will it be?”

“Fine. I will not move my hands,” Evelyn conceded.

With one warning glance, Cullen removed his hand from her, let go of her wrists, pushed them slightly apart, and reached for the rope. They didn’t have much time, but still he moved slowly, precisely, as he unspooled the rope, and then started encircling her wrists with it. Evelyn sighed as the rope first touched her skin. It was still a bit loose around her wrists, but then Cullen dragged the ends between her wrists, looping them over the rope, tightening it, and Evelyn groaned. Cullen glanced up from his work, checking to see if he wasn’t hurting her. Evelyn smiled at him reassuringly. Any sounds she made were ones of excitement.

As Cullen pulled the rope around the tangle that appeared between her wrists, Evelyn tried moving her hands. Cullen shot her a withering glare, and Evelyn immediately ceased her movements.

At last Cullen fed the end of the rope through a loop he created, and tightened it into a knot. He tested it, tugging on the rope, forcing Evelyn to move closer to him. With a quick smirk, he moved his hand up, lifting her arms above her head. Her breasts swayed with the movement and she gasped again, enjoying the feeling of his strength. He pulled on the rope harder and she felt herself straightening, the muscles of her back and arms working. Her mouth fell open on a silent breath. She was aware of every part of her body, of the way it felt, of the way it moved, and how it had to look.

“On your back,” Cullen ordered, abruptly letting go of her.

Evelyn’s hands fell in front of her, and the loss of sensation disappointed her. Quickly she uncurled her legs from underneath herself and laid on her back.

“Further back,” Cullen instructed, and helped her, gently holding her arm and side, and pushing her up the bed. When she was situated to his liking, he lifted her arms back up, and started tying the ends of the rope to the bedpost.
There was a bit of slack on the rope, but Evelyn felt her arms stretched taut. It was a completely new sensation, to be so vulnerable. A small part of her wanted to move her arms, to regain full control over them and the whole situation, but a bigger part of her was thrilled by letting go.

Once he was done, Cullen withdrew, standing next to the bed, surveying his handiwork appreciatively. Evelyn liked being watched like this, to feel a lover’s gaze moving over her, a caress without a touch, but she couldn’t wait much longer. She spread her legs open.

“We don’t have much time,” she told him, unable to contain the subtle movements of her hips.

“I know, but let me look my fill. I want this image burned into my mind. The beautiful and fearsome Inquisitor on her back, hands bound, legs spread for me.”

He knelt on the bed, reaching out a hand towards her, first touching the knot between her wrists, and then slowly running his fingers over her arm.

“Well, if you’ll be good, you won’t have to keep this just as a memory - you’ll be able to have me like this in the flesh again.” She smirked at him.

“Oh, so now I’m supposed to be good?” Cullen removed his hand and looked at her contemplatively.

Evelyn bit her lip and nodded.

“So what would I have to do to be deemed good?” Cullen asked, the corners of his mouth twitching upwards.

“Fuck me. Now. No more staring, no more waiting.”

That was one of the things she loved about their exchanges. She’d gladly submit to him, but then she’d be able to give him an order, and he’d follow it. Even with her wrists bound she could still reclaim some power.

Just like she wanted him to, Cullen moved to kneel between her legs and kissed her hard. His tongue invaded her mouth immediately, making her moan. She was so distracted by the kiss, that it was a surprise to feel the head of his cock nudging at her entrance. By no means was it an unpleasant surprise, and she moved her hips up in encouragement.

Cullen moved his head away from her, watching her face as he sank into her. Evelyn knew he liked to see her like this, to catalogue every smile, every breath she took in and every moan she let out, knowing he was causing all of it. She wanted to wrap her arms around him, to bring him close, to touch him, but her hands were restrained. She pulled at them futilely, and sighed, causing Cullen to chuckle.

“Something the matter?” he asked, thrusting slowly.

“Nothing. I’m perfectly fine,” Evelyn responded.

She didn’t want this to stop, but she knew that as soon as she was free, she’d have her hands all over him. For now she brought her leg up, wrapping it around Cullen’s middle. It was not enough. He was still clothed, and the only thing she felt was the smooth material of his coat.

With how limited their time usually was, they often didn’t get to take of their clothes, but they were on equal footing then. This time Evelyn was naked, save for her stockings, while Cullen remained clothed. She loved being able to see and touch his bare body, but there was something thrilling in this
as well, in how vulnerable she felt, how much her own nakedness was present in her mind in contrast with his clothed form.

“I can’t imagine how frustrating that is.” Cullen picked up his pace, which was still not as fast as Evelyn would wish. “I love touching you.” As if to prove the point, he swiped a thumb over her cheekbone tenderly, before moving to palm her breast. “I can do it as much as I like.” He rolled her nipple between his fingers. “And you can’t.”

His hand migrated to her side, and then her hip, his fingers gripping the soft flesh, holding her down as she tried to move against him.

“You’re so pleased with yourself.” Evelyn wanted to sound mocking, but it proved too difficult, as pleasure coursed through her. Cullen was pressing her down to the mattress, her hands were immobilised above her head, and unable to do anything, she could only feel.

“Yes. Very much. And I think so are you.” He bend down his head to flick his tongue over her nipple, before biting at it, making her shudder.

“I will be. Once you fuck me. Like you said you would.” Evelyn looked down at him pointedly.

“I can’t have you thinking of me as anything but a man of my word.”

With that Cullen pulled out almost completely, before thrusting into her hard. Evelyn couldn’t hold on to him, couldn’t brace herself against his powerful movements, and felt herself being pushed up the bed, only his hand on her hip anchoring her.

“Better?” he ask with a smirk as he started moving in quick, shallow but hard thrusts.

“Uh… oh… yeeees,” was all Evelyn managed to breath out. She was beyond talking at this point, pliant under him, marveling at her own complete surrender.

“Look at you. Just laying there, getting fucked, taking it so well. You’re mine to do with as I like.”

His pace was almost frenzied as he kept touching her, his hands warm and insistent. Evelyn just nodded at his words. That kind of talk was pushing her closer to the edge, where she was already headed at a rapid pace.

“What do you think Alistair would do if he were here? Would he wish to take your place or would he join me here, touching you, fucking you?”

Evelyn moaned shamelessly. One of them was bound to mention their lover sooner or later, but it always had the effect of arousing them further.

“Maybe he’d fuck you,” she responded, reaching for reserves of her coherency.

Cullen’s movements stuttered for a moment, before he groaned, tightened his hold on her and gave a particularly sharp thrust.

“I like…. I like that image too,” Evelyn managed to say, before Cullen moved his hand between her legs, and her senses fled her.

“I’ll have our king fuck me once we’re together, but right now I want to feel you come over my cock,” Cullen rasped into her ear.

The words, coupled with a deep thrust, send Evelyn over the edge. Her body bowed, her arms
pulling on the rope. There was a quick flash of pain in her muscles, but soon the pleasure overwhelmed that feeling, and Evelyn moaned helplessly.

Once her body stilled, she laid limp, breathing hard and grinning, eyes still closed. There was a movement above her and in a moment her arms were free. Blood was rushing to her hands quickly. They weren’t numb before, but still the difference was noticeable.

Evelyn reached out and embraced Cullen. She heard a metallic clinking before he was returning the gesture. She touched his hair and his face, and smiled, finally looking into his eyes.

“How was that?” Cullen asked, as if he could mistake her expression for anything but pure joy.

“A resounding success,” she responded. “From your excellent work with the rope to another great plan as to what we’ll do next time we’ll see Alistair.”

Cullen blushed a bit but smiled as he pulled away.

“I’m glad I did all right. I was actually late because I couldn’t decide on the right rope.”

He laughed, and Evelyn joined in. He was so attentive, so cautious and thoughtful. She wished she could reward him for that, but she had a meeting with the Antivan ambassador, for which she was probably already late. There was always an ambassador, wasn’t there?

Evelyn was indeed late for that meeting, but the charming ambassador made her feel as if everything was perfectly fine. Still, Evelyn knew she couldn’t afford any more such blunders. She had a clear goal she was working towards - the dissolution of the Inquisition. It had to be very carefully planned. They couldn’t let anyone know before they were ready. There were still small matters she needed to attend to, which would be impossible had people doubted her strength and the power of her organization.

The first two people she discussed her plan with were Cullen and then Alistair, and having their approval, she moved on to her most trusted advisors - Leliana and Josephine. She was a bit worried how they’d react. Would they think the Inquisition should operate indefinitely?

They both listened to her attentively as she explained her plans to them. They wondered as to her plans for the future of the Inquisition before, and now seemed content with Evelyn’s decision. They assured her that they’d support her in any choice she’d make, but Josephine was clearly glad that she’s be able to get back to Antiva and get more involved in her family’s estate, while Leliana wanted to help Cassandra establish herself as the new Divine.

Having the support of Leliana and Josephine made executing her plan much easier, and Evelyn began laying the groundwork for the eventual end of the Inquisition. At times she wondered if she were doing the right thing. She loved what she’d built, believed that she was doing a lot of good, but she never desired as much power as she was given. She didn’t want to be another great player of the game between nations, she didn’t want to cause any undue conflict. And there was also the matter of her personal happiness. She deserved it, after all.

Still, it was slow going, and Evelyn knew it would be months before she’d be free of her title and responsibilities. When the tedium of her work became too much, she would seek solace in Cullen’s arms. They’d play chess or take Dori and go horse riding, all the while talking of their future, of how good it was going to feel to have all the time and freedom they desired, and how they were going to spend that time with Alistair.

Despite their earlier attempts to keep their exchanges to a minimum, they wrote letters to their lover
almost constantly. There was no waiting - as soon as they finished reading his letter, they’d write a response, sending it out immediately. Alistair also wrote back expeditiously, following their example.

No matter how many letters they wrote, they never run out of things to say, updating each other on their day to day life, joking and making vague plans for the future. The inability to be direct was quite annoying, but Evelyn managed to convey to Alistair that they were hard at work trying to dissolve the Inquisition, and his enthusiastic response made all the effort feel even more worth it.

She was rather disappointed she couldn’t describe to him all the other things she and Cullen were occupied with. She was sure Alistair would appreciate some explicit letters, but that was not a risk she was willing to take. If she could, she’d tell him about that day in her room, or the time after that when she couldn’t keep her hands off Cullen, making up for being deprived of touching him, or the time after that when they snuck into the room Alistair occupied on his visit to Skyhold, or the time when Cullen closed all the doors to his office, pushed her on his desk, tied her hands behind her back and fucked her from behind.

Most of their encounters didn’t involve bondage, but every so often they’d try something new, calling it research for when they’d be reunited with Alistair. Evelyn had to admit that Cullen has gotten quite proficient at the techniques portrayed in the book Bull had sent them. She didn’t have any doubts that he could do that, but he took to it with ease and enthusiasm, and it pleased her.

The only thing weighing on her mind was the fact that they still didn’t have any excuse to see Alistair again. They were racking their brains for something, but coming up empty. Evelyn was on her way to Cullen’s office for another brainstorm session on the subject, but when she entered, she found Leliana perched on his desk, looking very pleased with herself, holding a parchment in her hand.

“Hello,” Evelyn greeted her, glancing at Cullen who was apparently trying to bore holes into the Spymaster with his intense glaring.

“Good of you to come,” Leliana answered. “I have some news for you.”

“Which she didn’t want to share with just me,” Cullen accused.

Leliana lifted her eyes to the heavens before proceeding.

“I’ve been told that a certain Viscount is planning a celebration of the grand reopening of the Chantry in his city, and he’s inviting every important figure in Thedas he can think of,” Leliana said.

Evelyn felt herself beginning to smile.

“Figures such as the Inquisitor, the Commander of the Inquisition and the King of Ferelden?”

Leliana inclined her head.

Evelyn started grinning.

“Thank you, Varric!” she exclaimed. “We’re going to see him, Cullen. Soon.”

Unable to contain herself, she run up to her lover and bend down to embrace him.

“I’m so happy,” she whispered.

“Me too,” he responded, his arms tight around her.
They only pulled apart when Leliana cleared her throat.

“The invitations will arrive in a matter of days,” she told them, getting up from the desk and moving to the doors. “Better pack up that rope,” she added with a wink before disappearing.

“How does she…?” Cullen was definitely red, and Evelyn felt her own cheeks heating up.

“I think we don’t want to know. What matters is that we’ll get to see Alistair. I can hardly wait.” She grabbed his hands and squeezed them affectionately. She wanted to go on expressing her happiness, when a thought hit her. “It’s going to be in Kirkwall. I know what that place did to you. Will you be alright?”

“Honestly… I never thought I’d go back there.” Cullen sighed. “But maybe this is good. Maybe it will help me to go there, to see the Chantry rebuilt, to confront my past. I’m definitely not going to stay behind - if this is our only chance of seeing Alistair, then I’m taking it.”

He looked determined, set in his conviction, and Evelyn was both worried and proud.

“We’re going to be there with you every step of the way. You’re not going to be alone.” She cradled his cheek, swiping a thumb over his cheekbone. “We’ll make it good.”

“I know. I can do it with you by my side.” Cullen took hold of her hand and kissed her knuckles. “And I am going to pack that rope.”

Evelyn laughed. It was going to be fine. With the three of them in one place everything was going to fall into place.

Chapter End Notes

Getting to write Leliana teasing Cullen was very fun for me. I just love to make him squirm.

Originally I wasn't planning on writing any bondage in this story, but ups... it kind of happened. Hope you guys don't mind.

As always, comments and kudos are greatly appreciated. Or you can find me on tumblr
Hi! It's been a while. Like a really long while. I've been trying my hand at writing some other things, which... The less said about that, the better. This coupled with real life nonsense cause this chapter to be so delayed.

You've heard of shameless smut. Now get ready for shameful smut, because I'm rather ashamed of this. At first this story was supposed to be much more wholesome (if a threesome can ever be wholesome), but it somehow evolved. You're all witnesses to my continued descent into further depravity. Heed the tags, and if you find something not to your taste, skip a few paragraphs - maybe it'll get better. And do try to enjoy yourself, if you can.

I'd like to thank Manchanification, for always listening to my ramblings, reading this thing through for me, and for making that awful joke. I'm still laughing at it, which makes me feel better about the whole thing.

When he was leaving Kirkwall, some three years earlier, Cullen thought it was for the last time. He was finally getting free of that accursed city. For him, it was the place where he made a mistake after mistake, a place where he completely lost himself. Why would he ever return there?

He couldn't have foreseen himself getting back to Kirkwall, but he also couldn't have foreseen himself being in love with two people. Life was strange like that.

He was not the same man as the one who sailed for the first time over the Waking Sea, he realized. He also wasn't the same man as the one who took the return trip to Ferelden. That first time he wasn't even much of a man, more of a boy, hurt, fearful and angry, ready to deal out justice, the way he understood it. He returned as a man, a bit more broken and a bit more whole, possessing the knowledge of what was truly right, no longer seeing things in black and white, prepared to atone for his mistakes.

Now as he was stepping onto the docks, he was still different. He was at peace, happy. It was still a strange concept at times, this happiness. Did he deserve it? Was he worthy of it? Of the two people who opened their hearts to him?

They hated when he spoke like this. They saw him as someone worthy of their affections, worthy of everything good, and sometimes it allowed him to see himself in the same light, even if only for brief periods of time.

“Finally land. Aren’t you glad?” Evelyn asked, cutting off his musings.

“Definitely.” He smiled at her.

It most certainly felt good to have solid ground under his feet again. He hated ships. Hated how they shook and swayed, making him unsteady. Hated how small they were when compared with the vastness of the sea. Hated the feeling of being trapped, unable to escape, crammed in a tiny cabin. He
d idn’t care how impressive the Inquisition’s vessels were - to him all ships were puny little death traps that smelled of salt and fear.

Still, it was worth it.

He looked around the docks, half expecting Alistair to jump out from a barrel. Evelyn was scanning their surroundings as well.

“I can’t see him,” she said finally.

“He’s probably at the keep,” Cullen responded, not believing his own words. If Alistair were in Kirkwall, he would have been standing at the docks since dawn, waiting for them.

“His ship was probably delayed. Don’t worry.”

“I’m not worried,” Cullen protested.

Evelyn shook her head.

“You don’t have to pretend for me. I see it in your face. You worry. But you shouldn’t. Nothing’s happened to him. I’m certain.”

“I…” Cullen sighed. “Ships are notoriously unreliable. If a storm hit, if pirates attacked…”

“Maker, how I wish I could hold your hand now. I swear to you, he’s all right.”

Cullen also wished he could hold her hand, to take some of her certainty for himself, but he had to satisfy himself with looking at her face, set with determination.

“Curly! Evelyn! You made it!” Varric was bounding down the stairs towards them.

“That we did. We couldn’t miss your big event,” Evelyn responded, starting to walk towards him.

“Something tells me neither I nor the very important religious ceremony that’s about to take place are what you’re most excited for,” Varric told them when they met halfway.

Cullen and Evelyn exchanged a nervous glance.

“Don’t worry, you’re not scandalizing me.” Varric laughed. “I consider Alistair a friend, and he was kind enough to inform me of the situation, so that I could make certain arrangements for the three of you. You’re welcome.”

“Thank you,” Evelyn told him quickly.

“Yeeees…” Cullen agreed tentatively. It was a bit awkward to know that another person was privy to what went on between them, but just like with everyone else, Varric’s reaction wasn’t anything worrying. “We appreciate it.”

“Don’t mention it.”

“Do you have any news of Alistair?” Evelyn asked.

“Oh, yes, as a matter of fact I do. He was delayed, I hear. He should be here by tomorrow morning.”

“Thank the Maker,” Cullen breathed out.
“Were you worried about him?” Varric wanted to know.

“Cullen has a thing about ships,” Evelyn explained.

“I’m not a fan either. But Alistair is perfectly fine. Now let’s get you two settled.” Varric started walking, and Cullen and Evelyn followed on either side of him.

“I’ve been thinking…” Varric grinned in a most unsettling manner, “that you may serve as an inspiration for my new series. I’d call it… ‘The Royal Affair’. A story of king… Alastair, who’s bored to death with his duties, and longing for adventure and love. He meets lady… Eve, the leader of a powerful organization, and her commander… her commander… Caleb? That’s a working name, just so you know.”

“You’re not truly thinking of writing something of that sort?” Cullen asked tentatively. He was mostly sure it was just a joke, and yet…

“I don’t know. It sounds very interesting. I’m sure it’d sell like hotcakes.”

“I’d definitely buy it,” Evelyn announced.

“You’re pulling my leg,” Cullen said, willing it to be true.

“Of course we are.” Varric patted his arm reassuringly. “I wouldn’t betray your trust like this.”

Cullen felt himself relaxing.

“Sometimes I wonder what would’ve happened under different circumstances,” Evelyn started saying then. “What if there was no Blight and no destruction of the Chantry and no Inquisition, for example. I think we’d still meet. A directionless Grey Warden, a disillusioned Templar, a woman stifled by the life of nobility, who all chose the same tavern on a cold night. Maybe we would’ve struck up a conversation at the bar. Maybe we would’ve all wanted a room, and had to share it, since it was the only one available. And from there anything would’ve been possible. I’d like to think we would’ve become adventurers, traveling and seeking our fortunes.”

They walked through the winding streets, from the docks to High Town, but all Cullen could think about was a nondescript tavern, and the three of them, meeting as complete strangers who didn’t have unshakable responsibilities weighing them down. It would’ve been so simple - just three people who’d love and fight together. It was a nice thought.

“That’s not half bad,” Varric said. “I can actually work with that. Three people from different backgrounds coming together and having adventures, in and outside of the bedroom.”

“You really think that’d make for a good story?” Evelyn asked.

“Why not? It would have romance and adventure and my signature impeccable prose.” Varric grinned.

“You should write it,” Cullen declared, surprising even himself.

“You’d support that?” Varric sounded truly incredulous.

“Yes. I’d like to see how that’d go. I’m… happy with my life.” It was odd to say that and actually mean it. “But still I’d be curious to know about another life we could’ve had. It would be different enough that no-one would link it to us, as long as you’d pick better names than Alastair, Eve and Caleb. Also, I’d skip the love scenes. I don’t want to know what you’d imagine us doing.”
Varric and Evelyn laughed.

“Maybe he’d inspire us,” Evelyn suggested.

“It’s enough that Bull is gloating about his… help.” Cullen shuddered.

“Bull… helped you?” Varric was grinning again.

“Maker’s breath. Why did I have to say that?” Cullen scrubbed a palm over his face, frustrated with himself.

“He just sent us a book,” Evelyn explained.

“I’m taking a note of that for my story.”

“I’m starting to regret opening my mouth.” Cullen sighed.

“Too late!” Evelyn and Varric exclaimed simultaneously.

“I missed you, Varric,” Evelyn said fondly.

“Who wouldn’t?” The Viscount laughed.

They walked on for some time, catching each other up on what happened since they last saw each other. It felt odd to stroll down those familiar streets without a heavy Templar armour, not to have people glancing at him nervously, not to expect treachery at every corner, but at the same time it felt… right.

“But there we are. My humble abode,” Varric said, interrupting Cullen’s thoughts. They entered the courtyard and moved to the entrance. “Sometimes I sneak out at night to sleep at the Hanged Man. The Keep doesn’t have the same… atmosphere. But alas more often than not I have to remain here, in my gilded cage.”

Guards opened the doors for them, and they entered into the opulent building. Cullen had been in the public section of the keep often in his Templar days, but Varric was leading them in a different way, to his private wing.

“I don’t feel at home in a place where there’s no-one retching in the corner or drunkenly singing patriotic songs,” Varric told them as they walked down a corridor with a high ceiling and golden carvings on the walls.

“I’m not particularly fond of the former, but I can provide the later, if you give me enough to drink,” Evelyn offered.

“How kind.” Varric gave her a mock bow.

“Maker preserve us all, when Alistair gets here, he’ll surely join you,” Cullen said. He wanted to be annoyed by the prospect, but thinking about the two people he loved grinning broadly and singing loudly, arms slung over each other, only made him smile.

“Would you just looked at that - Curly in love. Our little Templar is all grown up and happy,” Varric teased. “Ah, and he blushes! How often does he blush when you’re all alone?”

“Varric!” Cullen hissed, embarrassed.

“What? That’s research. For my book.”
“You’re…”

“You can finish that sentence after I show you to your rooms. You’re here, Evelyn.” He directed her to one set of doors. “And you here.” He indicated to the doors further down the hall.

Cullen didn’t say anything, following the direction. He entered a lavishly appointed sitting room and looked around, wondering what Varric could’ve meant. He moved into the adjacent bedroom, wondering if there was a secret passage of some sort, when he heard knocking. He turned around to catch Varric rapping at the pane of glass.

“Come on out,” he invited.

Cullen opened the glass door and joined Varric on the balcony.

“They connect,” Varric told him with a pleased smile. “There are larger and more elegant rooms in the keep, but they don’t have those clever balconies, so I hope the king won’t take offence to the fact that he’ll have humbler accommodations.”

“I think the king will be very pleased… with the room,” Cullen added hastily, when he saw Varric grinning in a decidedly lewd manner.

“Sure he will.” Varric winked.

“I’d never guess that when people found out about this scandalous affair they’d be making jokes and innuendos instead of being horrified. And I’m not sure if that wouldn’t have been preferable,” Cullen told him, willing his blush to subside.

“You’re just too easy… to tease.”

“I’ll have you know I was not easy,” Cullen protested.

“Tell me more.”

“You were baiting me!” Cullen accused.

“Perhaps. But for now let’s pause that discussion and go surprise Evelyn.”

Cullen wanted to say more, but decided against it. There was no point arguing with Varric, the master of word games.

They crept over the balcony, finding the doors to Evelyn’s room. They could see her from the outside, with her back to them, as she knocked on walls and ran her hands along shelves, apparently searching for a hidden entrance.

Varric indicated to Cullen that he should be the one to make their presence known. Cullen knocked on the glass and was rewarded with the sight of Evelyn’s startled jump.

“Some rogue you are,” Varric called out to her.

“I was distracted!” she shot back, throwing the doors open. “You’re both very bad men, scaring me like this.”

“He did it.” Varric pointed to Cullen.

“I was just…”
Evelyn pursed her lips and looked at him contemplatively.

“You’ll make it up to me somehow,” she decided.

Cullen could see from the corner of his eye that Varric was smiling, but he ignored him, and just nodded.

“The balcony was a clever idea,” Evelyn told Varric. “We appreciate it.”

“Don’t mention it. Now that we’ve got that out of the way, I think we should take a little walk. You’ve never been to Kirkwall, have you Evelyn?”

“No. My parents found it… unsuitable. If I ever visited, I’m sure I’d remember a handsome young Templar with curly hair.” She smiled at Cullen, and he couldn’t help reaching out to hold her hand for a moment.

“Leliana was right. You two are too adorable by half. I’m afraid to see the three of you together. Now let’s go. The servants will unpack your luggage by the time we’re done, and then there’ll be time for supper,” Varric announced.

Reluctantly, Cullen let go of Evelyn’s hand, and they follow behind their host.

Cullen felt himself tensing as they were leaving the keep and walking out into the city. Despite the fact that their journey to the keep was practically pleasant, he still worried something was going to make him uneasy and spoil the excursion for Evelyn. He knew he couldn’t remain inside Varric’s new residence for the entirety of their visit, and yet he was somehow unprepared for emerging again.

He could say he wished to remain in the keep, but what was the point in delaying the inevitable? He just had to believe that he was going to make it...

“I fear I might get lost in this unfamiliar city. Would you please offer me your arm, Commander?” Evelyn asked.

He did as she asked, and she slipped her arm against this. That was better. Much better. She was grounding him there in the present, her hand warm over his arm.

“I do feel much safer now,” Evelyn said. “Where are you taking me?”

“It’s entirely up to you,” Varric told her.

“I think I’d most like to see the Low Town with the Hanged Man, but I may not be dressed for the occasion.” Evelyn indicated her long dress. “I know! Show me where Hawke lives. And Fenris. Take me on a tour of High Town.”

And off they went. Cullen wasn’t often in High Town in his Templar days, and so he didn’t have many memories connected with the tall imposing buildings. It was easier to focus on Evelyn’s excitement and curiosity as she inspected every street and mansion. They were also not infrequently stopped by nobles wishing to invite the Inquisitor to a party or banquet. Cullen was fairly sure they wouldn’t be able to avoid going to at least a few of those, and it filled him with dread. Still, between the sightseeing and conversations, time went by quickly.

The sun was starting to set as they were returning to the keep for supper.

“I tried to make this a small affair, but I’m afraid you can never keep all of the nobles out. You close the doors - they come in through the window, you close the window - they come in through the
“chimneys,” Varric told them, regretfully.

“Do we have to change?” Cullen asked. “I’m already starving.”

“I’m trying to work on making this particular custom obsolete, so I’d encourage you not to.”

“Thank the Maker.” Cullen sighed.

“Not Maker - just me.” Varric smirked at him as they made their way through the winding corridors to the dining room.

The room was already filling, and soon they could focus on the most important task - eating. Cullen felt like at last he could stand to eat more than just toast. Being on dry land was working wonders for his digestion. He was trying to smile politely and nod to the old lady seated next to him, while also chewing through the last course before dessert, when a servant entered. The man whispered something to Varric.

“An important message for Lady Trevelyan and Ser Rutherford,” Varric informed the table. “Please follow my servant. And don’t worry if you have to desert us in order to deal with any arising challenges.”

There was something light in Varric’s voice, making Cullen think he shouldn’t worry, even if his words sounded slightly ominous. Across from him, Evelyn was furrowing her brows, clearly confused. Still, it was pointless to try asking for clarifications. They made their goodbyes and followed the servant, glancing at each other behind his back.

They ended up somewhere in the residential section of the keep. The servant bowed to them before a set of doors, and retreated. Evelyn reached for the door handle tentatively, and open the doors slowly. The room within was sparsely lit, making the tall hooded figure standing in the center look a bit foreboding. When the sound of the doors shutting reverberated through the room, the figure turned around slowly, removing the hood.

“Alistair?!” Cullen and Evelyn exclaimed at the same time.

“Surprised?” He grinned at them broadly.

He looked like he wanted to say something more, but couldn’t as Evelyn practically launched herself at him, jumping into his arms. Alistair made a small sound of surprise, but quickly regained his composure and enfolded her in his arms.

Cullen looked on at them, feeling a smile grow on his face.

“Are you going to just stand there?” Alistair demanded, one eyebrow raised skeptically.

“He likes to watch,” Evelyn murmured.

Cullen opened his mouth to deny, but then again why would he do that? He did like to watch the two of them.

“I most definitely do,” he said, his voice purposefully low as he strode towards them. Evelyn bit her lip, and he knew he beat her at her own game. “I missed seeing the two of you together. I’ve missed you,” he added, looking at Alistair.

Evelyn disentangled herself from Alistair, and in a moment Cullen felt strong arms around himself, and leaned into the touch, trying to pull Alistair as close as possible.
“I love you too, but you might consider showing that by not breaking my ribs,” Alistair whispered. Cullen let go of him immediately, ready to apologize and check for injuries, but Alistair was just smiling.

“I told you to stop crushing my ribs, not let go.”

“You can crush me instead,” Evelyn told them, stepping between them, embracing Alistair again. Cullen stepped close to her, trying to wrap his arms around the both of them. They stayed like that for some time, and Cullen felt perfectly contented. This was why he came to this Maker forsaken city for.

It was Evelyn who broke the peaceful moment.

“Your little stunt almost gave me a shock. A hooded figure waiting in a dark room is never a good sign. I was expecting some terrible news,” she said, pulling away.

“I couldn’t help myself,” Alistair answered sheepishly. “I couldn’t just walk into the dining room or I’d be stuck there for the rest of the night. I thought you wouldn’t mind a bit of theatrics.”

“Oh, I have nothing against theatrics or playacting. When it’s planned.” She had her back to him, but Cullen knew she was wearing the dangerous smirk which never failed to turn his thoughts to something inappropriate.

Alistair started smiling as well.

“Your letters gave me an idea as to what you’d like to do, but I’m eager to hear more.”

“All in due time. For now I think something less involved will serve us better. We’ve eaten, but you must be hungry.”

“Just when I thought I couldn’t love you any more…” Alistair laughed. “But for once I’m not hungry. I ate a bit on the ship.”

Cullen made a disgruntled sound.

“Our dear Cullen isn’t very fond of sea travel. He may never eat another dry toast as long as he lives, since that’s all he had for the entire trip,” Evelyn explained. “And when you weren’t there at the dock, he got terribly worried.”

“You were worried too.”

“I was just disappointed. You were terrified.”

“I’m here. I’m fine. We’ve had some bad wind on the first leg of the journey. That’s all. But I’m sorry you worried. And I’m sorry you had to go through all that just to see me.”

Cullen hated the way Alistair sounded - contrite, apologetic, as if he thought it was too much to ask for.

“It was worth it,” he said, taking Alistair’s hand. “I mean it,” he added, still seeing uncertainty on Alistair’s face. It was easy to forget that despite all his jokes, easy smiles and constant chatter, Alistair was a man who doubted himself, who felt vulnerable and uncertain.

“Don’t you dare apologize for this,” Evelyn added, taking hold of Alistair’s other hand.
"If you insist."

"We do," Cullen and Evelyn responded together.

"So what do you propose we do?"

"We could go back and eat a delicious meal in the oh so delightful company of the nobility of Kirkwall..." Evelyn started.

"...or we could go to your room and show you how much we’ve missed you," Cullen finished.

"That’s certainly a hard decision to make." Alistair tilted his head, pretending to look thoughtful.

"You’re thinking too much," Evelyn declared. "I’m making an executive decision - bedroom it is."

She started walking towards the doors, and Cullen followed her lead, both of them pulling Alistair behind them.

"Help! I’m being kidnapped." Alistair laughed.

"That was very unconvincing," Evelyn criticised.

"You’ll have to work on that," Cullen agreed.

He tried to let go of Alistair’s hands as they made it out to the corridor, but his lover wouldn’t let go, instead quickening his pace, leading them towards his room. They didn’t have to go far, and soon found themselves in the large sitting room.

As soon as the doors closed, Evelyn was walking backwards into the room, untying the strings which were holding her dress in place.

"Not wasting any time, I see," Alistair observed.

"Is that a problem?" Evelyn arched a brow questioningly, pushing the sleeves down her arms, and shimmying out of the dress, remaining in an undershirt. Cullen just stood back, curious to see where they were going to take this exchange.

"I don’t know. You’re not putting much effort into the subtle game of seduction. Has the spark gone out of our relationship?" Alistair pouted, clearly trying not to laugh.

"All I know is that I haven’t had sex since we left Skyhold. Someone was too preoccupied trying not to vomit during the whole journey. I’m not waiting anymore." Evelyn quickly took off her undershirt, revealing a simple breastband and knickers.

"Would you like to know how long it has been for me?" Alistair asked, crossing his arms over his chest.

Evelyn’s expression changed quickly. She looked almost ashamed for a moment, before a smirk appeared on her face. Without preamble, she swiftly removed her underwear and strode back up to Alistair. She was a vision, walking purposefully, her glorious breasts swaying with her movements.

It took supreme effort for Cullen to remain passive, but he truly wanted to know how this was going to end without his intervention. He watched as Evelyn reached Alistair, grabbed him by the hair and brought his head down for a hard kiss. Just as he was starting to respond, she ended the kiss, instead sinking down to her knees before him and starting to work on his belt and the fastenings of his breeches. Cullen could hear Alistair’s breathing going shallow, and then the frustrated noise he
made, as Evelyn stopped.

“I’m sorry. That’s very forward and unromantic of me. Would you like me to stop? Would you prefer I read you some love sonnets first?” she asked, smirking.

“You’ve made me reconsidered all my previous statements,” Alistair responded breathlessly.

“That’s what I thought.” She grinned up at him broadly, before pulling out his cock and taking it into her mouth.

Alistair made a sound somewhere between a yelp and a moan.

“You seem unsteady,” Cullen told him, stepping behind him, pressing himself against his back, making Alistair feel his half hard erection.

“I definitely wouldn’t mind… I wouldn’t mind…” Alistair was apparently unable to end the sentence, as Evelyn continued taking him deeper into her mouth. “I wouldn’t mind some support,” he at last managed to finish, leaning heavily against Cullen.

Cullen was tempted to kiss Alistair, but the king’s unsteady breathing made him reconsider. Instead he started running his lips against his throat. In that position he could also watch Evelyn, who managed to look up and catch his eye, not ceasing her movements. He felt his fingers tightening over Alistair’s sides, as he ground his fully hard cock against him.

“I do like to watch,” he said, thinking back to their earlier exchange. “And this is quite the sight. See how she missed you?” he asked Alistair. “You can’t say she’s not putting in effort. And you can’t deny that you like seeing her like this,” he added, mesmerized by the slow, deliberate movements of her mouth which stretched to accommodate Alistair’s girth. Evelyn looked up at him again, smiling - obscene and perfect. She locked eyes with him, and there was something deeply intimate and exciting in the contact without touch.

“She is. I do,” Alistair managed to say between rushed breaths. He reached behind himself, holding onto Cullen, fingers digging into his flesh, as if he was trying to keep himself grounded in the moment.

“I missed you as well,” Cullen whispered in his ear, before biting the lobe, eliciting a long moan. He started running his hands over Alistair’s chest, feeling the hard muscles quiver under his touch. “And I’ll show it to you by…” He knew exactly what he wanted, but there was time enough for him to explain it. For now he wanted his lover to be left guessing. “You’ll enjoy it, I’m sure.”

Alistair hummed his agreement, probably too far gone to be able to focus on any kind of speculation. He twisted his head, seeking out Cullen’s mouth. Cullen obliged, kissing him heatedly. He felt more than heard a disappointed groan Alistair made. They broke apart and Cullen saw that Evelyn wasn’t touching Alistair anymore.

“For people who claim they like to watch, you’re doing very little of that,” she accused. She didn’t mind, Cullen knew. This was just a move in a game she was playing, a means to some kind of end. He didn’t know what exactly she wanted to achieve, but he was willing to go along with it.

“Like to have an audience, do you?” he asked.

“I’m not sure about an audience. Just the two of you. Watching me.” She moved her hands to her breasts, squeezing them.

“I’m watching,” Alistair said, sounding almost desperate. “I’m watching. Just please…”
Cullen saw a grin spread on Evelyn’s face. She loved getting Alistair to that point, to the moment when he was needy and incoherent. And Cullen liked that too.

“Good,” Evelyn said, still not making any movement to take him back into her mouth or even touch him. Instead, she pinched her nipples, hard, and moaned at her own touch. That image of her kneeling down before them, hands on her breasts, almost expectant - it gave him an idea.

It was filthy, there was no doubt about that, but he couldn’t resist. If Evelyn wanted to stop, she’d let him know, but he had a feeling she was of the same mind as he was. It was rather amazing how in tune they’ve become. He learned to trust his instincts and not hesitate around her. It often turned out that she was the one subtly guiding him to do what she wished.

His hands drifted down Alistair’s stomach, one wrapping around his straining cock. The king let out a shuddering breath, pushing into his fist. Cullen enjoyed the sight of his own hand handling Alistair’s cock, watching him buck into that touch, but he needed to see Evelyn’s reaction.

She caught his eye and gave a small nod.

“I can see you,” Alistair told them, apparently catching that quick exchange. “What are you plotting?”

“Something a bit different,” Evelyn responded, reaching for his cock.

Her small soft fingers joined Cullen’s, twining as they moved in tandem.

“Holding hands over my cock? Very romantic.” Alistair laughed, but the sound quickly turned into a groan as Evelyn swiped her thumb over the head of his cock, smearing the precome gathered there.

“I was thinking less about that, and more about you finishing on my tits,” Evelyn responded, sounding almost matter of fact.

Cullen felt Alistair shudder, his cock twitching. He saw the tiny movements of Alistair’s head, as he stared at their hands over his cock, and then at Evelyn’s breasts, which she was still touching with one hand.

“You don’t feel very funny now, do you?” Cullen questioned, fully knowing the answer.

Alistair just shook his head.

“We haven’t done that before. Still so many new things to try,” Cullen continued. “Quite shocking neither of us thought of this before. She’s rather brilliant, isn’t she?” He felt her fingers tightening over his.

“Brilliant,” Alistair agreed, staring pointedly at the way she tugged on her nipple.

“She wanted us to watch this, and Maker do I want to see it - you coming all over her perfect tits.”

Alistair was already close, Cullen could tell by how rigid he was and by his uneven breathing, and those words were probably what pushed him over the age. With a long moan he started coming, his seed splattering over Evelyn’s chest, sliding down the slopes of her breasts, and over her nipples.

“Maker,” Alistair groaned out, when his orgasm subsided. “You look… You look…”

“Obscene? Filthy? Debauched?” Evelyn helpfully supplied, a grin on her face.

“All of that, and perfect,” Alistair agreed. “And marked.” There was something possessive in his
voice - deep, primitive and satisfied. Cullen had to concur with that. There was something about seeing the evidence of his passion visible on her skin like this.

Evelyn moved slightly, and in an instant Cullen and Alistair were both offering her their hands to help her up. She accepted them gratefully, rising back up. Alistair quickly pulled off his shirt, probably to give her something to clean herself with. Before she could do that, Cullen pulled her closer to himself. He gazed at her for a moment - at her mussed hair, swollen lips and the mess on her chest. Another memory forever seared in his mind.

He kissed her, and just as she was trying to bring him flush to her body, he pulled away and bend down to lick a bit of fluid from her nipple. Evelyn moaned, while Alistair swore, his voice wrecked. It was rather odd, tasting the bitter seed where normally he expected only clean skin, but at the same time it felt exciting. Spurred on by the reactions of his lovers, he moved to suck her other nipple clean, scraping it with his teeth as he let go of it.

He was curious to see their expressions, but before he could, Alistair was already kissing him, and Maker, if this was the reaction he was going get, he could do that every day. He could’ve said something about being crushed, but then again, he didn’t mind in the slightest. He ground himself against Alistair’s stomach, searching for friction to ease the pressure in his now aching cock.

“So what’s the plan?” Alistair asked, breaking the kiss.

“Well, the plan was for you to finally fuck me,” Cullen told him, feigning nonchalance, despite feeling his excitement growing, tempered by a hint of nerves.

Alistair’s eyes went wide at his words.

“You really want me to…”

“I’m very sure he does,” Evelyn said, coming up to Alistair, sneaking her hands around his middle. “We’ve talked about it, and he sounded very enthusiastic.”

“Maker, you two are going to kill me.” Alistair shook his head, looking decidedly unperturbed by the prospect of impending sex related death.

“Hopefully not,” Cullen responded, throwing off his jacket and undershirt in one go. “We’ve made a lot of plans for you.”

“I’m with Cullen on that one,” Evelyn agreed. “Let’s wait some, oh, I don’t know, thirty or forty years. I’d say that’d be a respectable age for you to be fucked to death.”

She couldn’t see Alistair’s expression, focused on watching Cullen disrobe, but Cullen did see it, and it made him pause, his belt buckle halfway undone. Something flashed over Alistair’s face, something sad and resigned. Were those plans too far in the future? Was he not ready for a commitment which Evelyn very lightly implied?

Then it hit Cullen. Alistair was a Warden. He didn’t know how long he had, if the Calling wasn’t going to claim him before he could grow old and frail.

This was not the right time for contemplating mortality. Cullen wasn’t sure he was doing it for Alistair or himself, but he quickly discarded his belt and moved up to Alistair, crushing their mouths together. There was no space for thoughts in a kiss that stole air from their lungs, and when they finally parted, Cullen could see that Alistair was firmly back in the here and now.

“At this rate you’ll never get naked.” Evelyn huffed. “I feel very unfairly exposed here.”
“To be fair, you did it all of your own accord,” Cullen told her.

“You are quite terrible,” Evelyn said, before giving Cullen a quick peck, and walking away to the bedchamber. “Why is it that we always have our reunions in sitting rooms?” she mused.

“The first time was my fault - I ruined your underwear and had to immediately apologize,” Alistair reminded them. “But this time was definitely your fault, Evelyn. Not that I’m complaining.”

He took a few steps in Evelyn’s direction, before his breeches slid down to his knees, impeding his movement, almost making him stumble.

Cullen suppressed a laugh at the sight, while Evelyn started chuckling heartily, leaning on the doorframe.

“Stupid breeches,” Alistair muttered, pulling off his boots, and finally the offending garment.

Cullen looked him over appreciatively. Maker, all those muscles, all that raw strength. It was almost worth it, this separation which allowed him to be amazed by it anew.

“I’ve been told it’s not polite to stare.” Alistair’s teasing voice took him out of this thoughts.

“It’s a good thing we’re not here to be polite then,” Evelyn countered. “What we just did was definitely im polite.” She grinned broadly, and Cullen felt heat stirring within him, knowing that this woman who appeared so proper to the outside world, in truth enjoyed the filthiest things.

“Well, in that case I’ll call it inconvenient,” Alistair said, walking up to her, his arm going behind her back, his large hand resting on her hip. “Cullen's so distracted with his staring he hasn't even started undressing.”

“I’d say that’s very romantic - I’m so awestruck with the two of you that I can do nothing but stare,” Cullen defended himself.

Still, he reached down to undo his boots. Cullen tried to focus on the task at hand, but it was rather difficult as he kept glancing up from his boots, watching as Evelyn pressed herself to Alistair, and as he in turn idly stroked her skin.

“I think we better stop distracting him,” Evelyn suggested.

Cullen wanted to protest, but they already turned their backs to him, disappearing into the bedchamber. He groaned in frustration, but without them to take his mind off of things, he managed to rid himself of the boots, which were quickly followed by breeches and underclothes.

Fully naked, he practically ran into the adjacent chamber. He saw them right away, stretched on the bed, close together, but not doing anything, waiting for him. Not wasting another moment, he threw himself onto the mattress. They outstretched their arms to him, bringing him close. All three of them made various noises at the uninhibited contact of skin on skin, their bodies fully pressed together, limbs tangled, mouths searching.

Cullen was on top first, but soon found himself with his back to the mattress. Alistair and Evelyn hovered over him, their smiling faces surrounded by halos of mussed hair. He was about to say something, but then Evelyn was bending down, kissing him, and he had no complaints.

She was distracting him, it turned out, as he felt Alistair's mouth on his cock. He made a shocked gasp, which Evelyn swallowed with her mouth, before moving away, letting him watch as Alistair took more of him into his mouth. He had barely started, but it almost felt like too much - after all the
time he’s spent at sea, unable to touch Evelyn, after what he’s seen this evening, after what he did - he was already beyond aroused. And then Alistair had to look up at him, brown eyes hooded, and it was definitely too much. Cullen felt his eyes closing, as he tried to stay in control.

“Not much of a watcher now, are you?” Evelyn teased.

“Fuck,” Cullen grunted, still keeping his eyes closed.

“Ah, but that comes a bit later,” she responded, voice light.

She was far too pleased with herself, he decided, but he couldn’t do anything about it at the moment. Alistair chose that moment to start pressing one oil slick finger into him, and all Cullen could do was pray to the Maker he’d last just a bit longer. It was not an unfamiliar feeling - they already did that more than once, but this time it heralded something more. His body was relaxed, pliant, as Alistair pushed deeper, deeper, until…

“Fuck! Maker!” Cullen cursed when Alistair reached that strange place within him, which always made him respond with shocking strength.

He hear Evelyn chuckle. He would not stand for that. Despite the pleasure which was mounting within him, he managed to gather enough concentration to turn his head and open his eyes, looking up at her. She was sitting back on her hunches, staring at the two of them, her hands roaming her own body. She was looking away from his face, and so she squeaked in surprise when he reached for her, his fingers digging hard into her soft hip and round arsecheek.

She went easily, when she understood his intention, allowing him to pull her over himself, settling herself on his chest, her glistening cunt open before his waiting mouth. He felt Alistair hum his appreciation for the development. Trying to keep in control, Cullen instinctively tightened his fingers on Evelyn’s flesh, which in turn made her gasp and shift restlessly, her arms reaching for the headboard to steady herself. He pulled her a fraction closer and reached out with his tongue, finally tasting her.

Ordinarily, he’d relish those sensations, but at that precise moment Alistair decided to push another finger into him and let his mouth encompass almost the entirety of his cock. Being stretched end enveloped like this was causing Cullen’s mind to shut down. He wasn’t able to do much more than give himself over to the sensations.

Luckily Evelyn wasn’t one to be denied what she wanted. Her hand found its way into his hair, tugging at it, forcing him to return to pleasuring her. He licked at her pearl as she ground against his face.

Evelyn’s hips were undulating, and Cullen felt his own do the same, as he thrust into Alistair’s mouth and pushed against his fingers. When he added a third finger, Cullen knew he was done for. He couldn’t hold on like this for long, but he’d be damned if Evelyn didn’t come before him, so he focused on sucking on her nub forcefully.

As soon as he heard her voice break and felt the rush of her wetness, he let himself go. Two more quick thrust from Alistair’s talented fingers, and Cullen was coming, a silent, shaking orgasm taking hold of his whole body.

When he managed to return to something resembling coherency, Evelyn was twisted next to him, her head beside his, while her legs rested over his torso. Alistair looked rather comfortable with his head on Cullen’s stomach, running a hand up Evelyn’s legs, which lay before his face. He grinned broadly when he saw Cullen watching him.
“I’d suggest we get to the next event, but I think you need a moment,” he said smugly.

Cullen started to protest, but stopped. He did need a moment.

“I think you blew his mind. Among other things,” Evelyn chimed in.

Alistair laughed, and Cullen joined him, not able to resist.

“You two are terrible,” he declared.

“And wanton and depraved and filthy and all those other delightful things,” Evelyn responded, stretching her arms above her head, and rolling to her side. “I’m getting sleepy like this, but don’t let me drift off. We’re not wasting this night.”

“In that case, maybe you could recite some love sonnets to us now?” Alistair suggested, getting up and crawling to rest between the two of them.

Evelyn begun shaking her head, but then stopped abruptly.

“I think I’ve got one,” she announced. “Roses are red, violets are blue. Fuck him and he’ll fuck me too.”

“Be still my beating heart.” Alistair tried to sound offended, even as he shook with repressed laughter. “Maker, this feels so right, doesn’t it?” he added after a moment.

“My awful poem?”

“No, you crass creature. Us. Being together again.” Alistair reached for their hands, twining their fingers.

“It most definitely does,” Cullen agreed. “It feels... complete.”

Alistair turned his head to Cullen and smiled.

Evelyn cleared her throat.

“Let me try another poem then,” she said. Both Cullen and Alistair groaned in disapproval, but that didn’t seem to deter her. “Roses are red, violets are blue. I love you, and he loves you too.”

“That was surprisingly touching,” Alistair decided.

“And you thought I was going to be gross again. Oh ye of little faith.” Evelyn sighed dramatically.

On any other night Cullen would’ve let them banter like this longer, but Evelyn was right when she said they shouldn’t be wasting time.

“I think that’s the moment I needed, just finished,” he told them.

He felt his heartbeat speed up with excitement, anticipation, and just the tiniest hint of worry. He expected Alistair to move over him, strong arms braced against his head, hips wedged between his, but that didn’t happen. Instead Alistair turned to kiss him, and started slowly pulling him close, manoeuvring Cullen above him. Cullen wanted to question him, but it was difficult to get away from his kiss. Alistair’s erection was rubbing against his stomach, and he felt his own cock responding.

They moved languidly like this, tongues tangling, hips grinding, when he felt a small hand sneaking between their bodies. Cullen groaned in frustration, feeling that she was focusing on touching
“Feeling neglected?” Evelyn whispered in his ear. “No need. I’m just doing this so that he’ll be nice and slick for when you ride his cock.”

Cullen gasped, breaking the kiss. So that was the idea. It made a lot of sense - that way he’d have more control over what was going to happen. Alistair was nothing if not considerate.

“Do you want that?” he asked, confirming Cullen’s earlier thought.

“Maker, yes,” Cullen responded.

He didn’t want to wait anymore, so he pushed himself up, bracing one hand on Alistair’s stomach, and reaching behind himself with the other. He found Alistair’s cock, hard and slick, and moved his fist over it once before grasping firmly at the base and slowly starting to lower himself over it, feeling the broad crown touching his entrance.

When he thought of that moment before, he kind of expected himself to balk, to stop and be uncertain, but none of that happened. He felt pure certainty and desire as he pressed down, accepting his lover into his body. There was definitely a sensation of stretching, of his body trying to accommodate that new, yet not completely unfamiliar intrusion, but no discomfort or pain.

His lids have drifted close in his concentration, as he focused on moving slowly and deliberately in that new position, but he didn’t want to miss the sight before him. Cullen opened his eyes to see Alistair staring up at him, lips slightly parted and smiling, watching him intently. He’s had this man under himself plenty of times before, but this was different. He felt a bit vulnerable, and yet still in control.

He moved his hips a fraction, feeling that stretching sensation expanding within him, taking more of him. Alistair made some muffled sound, and his hand shot up to Cullen’s hip. He probably wished to pull him down, but stop himself, not wanting to force him to do anything too quickly. Cullen liked that hand there - another point of contact between them, secure and intimate.

Moving lower still, he turned to the side, needing to see Evelyn as well. She watched them with rapt attention, and smiled when she noticed him glancing at her. Cullen held out a hand to her, pulling her closer, moving her palm to his other hip. She understood his wordless gesture, her small hand fitting warmly over his skin.

With a decisive push Cullen took more of Alistair’s cock, and felt the tip brushing against that mysterious spot that made him shiver with pleasure. Spurred on by that sensation, he sank all the way down, gasping at the intense feeling - it was the stretch, the pleasure, the intimacy of the whole thing, all together making him a bit unsteady. His own hands felt heavy as he leaned on Alistair for support. But then there were also the hands of his lovers on his hips, grounding him.

For a moment he stayed just like that, slowly relaxing, but he couldn’t remain motionless for long. There was need within him, something like an itch that needed to be scratched. Experimentally, he lifted his hips a bit, before sinking back down. The pleasure rippled through him at the movement, so he repeated it, a bit faster, a bit more forceful. And then again. And again.

He was finding his rhythm, getting lost in the sensations, but he made sure to keep his eyes open, to see as well as feel. Alistair’s expression was something to behold - his satisfaction evident as he breathed little sighs. His hand on Cullen’s hip was tightening, pressing, pulling - a gentle encouragement rather than a demand as he bucked on his lap.
“Enjoying yourself?” Cullen asked him. It wasn’t so much a question, as a form of prompting Alistair to speak.

“Yesss,” Alistair gasped out. Cullen feared this was all he was going to say, but Alistair continued. “I’m enjoying watching you fuck yourself on my cock.”

Cullen heard himself groan, his hips stuttering in their movement.

“And I’m enjoying taking you, having you this deep inside me,” he responded, recovering, picking up his pace. “Maker, I should’ve done it sooner,” he added.

There was a faint whimper at his side. It was Evelyn, letting only the smallest sounds of pleasure escape her lisp. She was watching him even more keenly than Alistair did. Perhaps because she wasn’t experiencing any intense physical sensation, or delivering it, she could be more focused on observing. That was not exactly fair, Cullen decided.

He wondered briefly what to do about that fact. The solution came to him quickly. His cock felt heavy against his stomach, neglected and in need of attention. He expected that Alistair would soon understand his predicament, and touch him, but there was an even better alternative.

“Suck my cock,” he told her, his voice deep and authoritative. He knew that when he sounded like that, she’d follow any order he’d give without hesitation.

Just as he expected, she licked her lips quickly, before bending down to capture his erection in her mouth. He groaned at the feeling of her warm mouth enveloping him as she moved her head lower. He couldn’t move quickly now, lest he’d make her choke, but he couldn’t give this up. Evelyn was bobbing her head leisurely, and Cullen ground his hips deliberately.

It wouldn’t take long for him to come like this, and judging by the noises Alistair was making, he would not be far behind either. Cullen wished he could bring Evelyn there with them, but in his position he couldn’t touch her properly.

Luckily, Alistair seemed to have an idea about rectifying the situation. Cullen watched him put his large palm over Evelyn’s arse, urging her to move closer to him. She seemed a bit confused, letting go of Cullen’s cock, and glancing up in confusion. All Cullen could do was respond with equally nonplussed expression. Evelyn turned to Alistair in search of answers.

“Come here,” Alistair told her. “Put that pretty cunt over my face and let me have a taste.”

Evelyn whimpered, but then shook her head.

“That would not work,” she protested, sounding disappointed.

“Not with that attitude, it won’t,” Alistair admonished. “You’re halting the entire proceedings, and I’d very much like to continue,” he added.

Evelyn still wasn’t moving, and so Alistair slapped her on the arse. Cullen could see there wasn’t much force behind the gesture, but clearly it was the intention that mattered to Evelyn. She gave a little sigh, threw her leg over Alistair’s middle and moved to position herself properly.

Cullen wished that they’d figured this whole thing out earlier - the wait was killing him. He felt restless, his hips twitching, even those small movements sending jolts of pleasure up his spine, making him crave more.

“I’m really not sure how…” Evelyn started saying. Her words trailed off, her voice breaking into a
moan as Alistair took firm hold of her thighs and pulled her close to his face.

“Alistair’s a bit busy at the moment, but if he could, I’m sure he’d say that it works,” Cullen said, watching Evelyn’s back bow and her lids flutter. She opened her eyes fully, just to roll them at him, while Alistair made a choked affirmative groan, which caused Evelyn to gasp.

“It only works if I can suck your cock,” she said.

He wanted to concede that point, but then she was reaching her hand for his erection, holding it still as she wrapped her lips around the tip. She couldn’t get very much more of it into her mouth, but still Cullen groaned at the feeling.

They couldn’t push and pull each other desperately, like they did so many times before. Instead, they were forced into something deliberate, almost excruciatingly slow, and yet sensuous. They were connected in a different way than ever before - a movement from one of them affecting all three, as if even the smallest trembling traveled through three bodies in turn.

Alistair was gently thrusting up into Cullen, who responded by grinding down over his cock, before lifting his hips, pushing his own erection into Evelyn’s mouth. Every time he pushed, he felt the pull of her lips, and watched as she undulated her hips over Alistair’s face, spurring him on to fuck Cullen.

From his position Cullen had a perfect vantage point to look on at them, at their bodies connected.

“That works fine. Very fine,” he finally said.

There was no response, just a flicker of a tongue on the underside of his cock and another shallow thrust. They couldn’t say anything, being occupied as they were. They loved to talk, but their current situation presented an interesting opportunity for Cullen.

“I wish you could see yourselves like I see you now,” he told them. “Oh, but just imagine what someone who’d walk here would see, what they’d think… Our holy Herald of Andraste sucking off her commander. The noble king of Ferelden with his face full of her cunt. A loyal Fereldan being fucked by his sovereign. All at the same time.” He felt how they responded to his words, their pace quickened, muffled voices emanating against heated flesh. And he felt himself responding to them. This was not going to last long. “No one would be able not to stare at such a sight - scandalous, perverse and so very beautiful.”

Cullen felt Alistair bucking under him a bit harder, somehow aligning perfectly with that spot inside of him. He couldn’t say anything more - he just moaned. Evelyn must’ve felt how close he’s gotten, as she moved her hand to fondle his sack and swirl her tongue over the head of his cock. He couldn’t tell what caused it, that deep pressure inside him, or the skillful mouth on his erection, but at last it was too much, and Cullen felt himself tipping over the edge.

He couldn’t even try to keep quiet, instead allowing himself to shout out his relief, his head thrown back, as his body shook with pleasure. He managed to come down a bit in time to see Evelyn free his cock and moan through her own orgasm, holding on to his hip with almost bruising strength. He couldn’t focus on watching her though, because almost as soon as the climax seized her, Cullen felt Alistair reaching his end. It was an odd sensation, something he’s never experienced - this warm stickiness inside him. But more important than that was the knowledge that Alistair was there with them in this pleasure.

Holding himself upright was proving a challenge, and as soon as he felt Alistair stilling under him, Cullen slid to lay at his side. Through half closed eyes he saw Evelyn collapse on Alistair. They
remained like that for some moments, trying to get their breathing under control.

“How about joining us here before you fall asleep with your backside to us,” Cullen suggested.

“Do you have something against my backside?” she shot back.

“I do love it,” Cullen responded, “but I much prefer waking up to your face.”

“That’s all well and good, but I’m damn exhausted,” she complained. Still, she made the effort to roll off Alistair, reluctantly turn her body, and settle between him and Cullen.

“A mirror!”

Cullen and Evelyn looked at each other, surprised by Alistair’s seemingly random exclamation.

“All this talk of looking and seeing got me thinking. We need a mirror. Maybe one above the bed,” he explained.

“I’m not saying that it wouldn’t be very… interesting, but asking for something like that would be rather suspicious,” Cullen suggested.

“We’ll think of something.” Evelyn yawned. “Maker, I’m so tired. Does anyone object to sleeping through the rest of the night, and continuing to make up for lost time tomorrow?”

“I second that motion,” Alistair agreed. “But we will get to the mirror issue.”

“Let’s sleep,” Cullen told them. After the stressful ship journey and the decisively strenuous activities they just partook in, he was more than contented to forgo another round.

Evelyn snuggled up to him, her head on his chest, an arm slung over his torso. Alistair soon covered her hand with his, as he pressed himself to her back.

“This will sound terribly sentimental, but I missed this as much as the sex,” Cullen said. Neither of his lovers said anything to that. Cullen laughed to himself, realizing that they were already asleep. There was going to be time for sentimentality in the morning. He closed his eyes and felt himself drifting off.

Chapter End Notes

The part with Evelyn describing a potential story for Varric was inspired by an AU idea that’s been pestering me for a while. I won't write it, because I'm busy with this story as is, and I'm fully aware the idea isn't that interesting to anyone but me, and actually diverges so far from canon that it's basically an original story. Still, I had to somehow get it out there.

I thought I had the next chapter ready, but the idea I had for this one proved too big for one chapter, so I had to split it into two. The next chapter is some cute nonsense with them having dates in Kirkwall, and the one after that is 100% smut.

I'm actually going on vacation next week so I'll have more time to write, and I hope the break between this chapter and the next won't be so long. As always, comments and kudos are very great. They honestly mean the world to me.
The Hanged Man

Chapter Notes

I’ve crawled out of the ME Andromeda hole to bring you this chapter. It's not beta read, so I'd be obliged if you let me know of any mistakes. I'm doing my best, but you know how it is... I hope it's still enjoyable.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

To his utter surprise, Cullen slept far longer than usually. He still woke up before his lovers, but he marveled at how deep and peaceful his slumber was. On the ship he slept very lightly, waking up every time a stronger wave hit. With how small the ship was, it was near impossible for Evelyn to sneak to his cabin. She managed it a few times, and only those nights were tolerable. Here, on solid ground, with two warm bodies anchoring him, he slept like a child.

Who would’ve thought that his first night in Kirkwall wouldn’t be plagued by nightmares? Maybe it was because nothing in this room reminded him of the Templar dormitories.

Only the Knight Commander was afforded a private sleeping chamber - the rest of the Templars slept communally. That was supposed to make it easier to resist any form of temptation, but in Cullen’s experience, it hardly ever worked. It was never really quiet - there were the sounds of patrols, snoring, people whispering and passing a drink, not to mention some more unsavory noises. The beds were small and hard, and the rooms stifling in summer and drafty in colder months.

Here, everything was quiet, warm and soft. He wasn’t alone, but the people he shared the room with were of his choosing.

And it wasn’t just the room they shared. Knight Captain Cullen would’ve never believed that he’d one day be sharing a bed with two people. Those few entanglements he’s had before, though pleasurable, made him also uneasy. When he was a youth in Kinloch Hold, he knew what Chantry preached about fornication, but curiosity was stronger than any prayer. He and a serving girl spend more than their fair share of afternoons in a supply room, discovering all the things that were said to be sinful. They weren’t in love, but he did have warm feelings for her. He was thankful that she was visiting her family when the abominations attacked. He never saw her again, but it was enough to know she was safe, that she didn’t have to die or go through what he did.

Being tempted by the desire demon, tortured… It changed him. For a time all desire terrified him. He tried to fight every such feeling that arose in him. He finally fully understood why the Chantry deemed such things wrong. Yet after a time, he wanted to feel normal, to want without fearing, to be a man like all others. When the opportunity to give into temptation presented itself, he took it, and he was better and worse for it at the same time. Better, because he felt like he won with the demon at last, having done what he wanted in safety, on his own terms, without its’ specter hanging over him. Worse, because he defied the Chantry and his Order.

But here he was, a lover to a woman and a man, unashamed, unafraid and genuinely happy. He wished he could go back and tell his younger self that he’d know love one day, that his fears were going to be assuaged, and that his mistakes were going to be paid for, maybe not completely, because some mistakes couldn’t be rectified, but that he’d at least tip the scale a bit in his favor.
The past was done, and maybe it was good to be in Kirkwall again, to plan for the future here. The
demon had no hold on him, and neither did this city. He was a free man, and during the following
weeks he was going to use that freedom to enjoy himself, to make good memories.

“What shu think ‘bout?” Alistair muttered.

Cullen turned to look at him, as his king blinked up at him sleepily, his words slurred, since he
mumbled them against Evelyn’s shoulder.

“Making new memories in Kirkwall,” Cullen responded, smiling.

“I think we’ve already made quite a few,” Alistair said, sitting up. “And I’m ready to make dozens
more, but I think now’s not the best time.”

“Throwing us out after having used us, are you?” Cullen teased.

“I would, but she sleeps so peacefully.” Alistair stroked Evelyn’s hair.

“I’ll carry her to her room then,” Cullen suggested.

“I’ll help you get the doors.”

Working together, they rolled Evelyn to her back, got themselves dressed, covered her with a
blanket, and made their way to the balcony. They stepped out into the sunny morning, and Cullen
was glad for the remoteness of their location. No one would see the Commander of the Inquisition’s
forces cradling his leader to his chest, and the King of Ferelden helping him maneuver her. Evelyn
trusted them so much that she hardly even stirred through the whole process, which filled Cullen
with joy. Finally they managed to get her to bed. Lying her down, Cullen kissed her cheek, and
Alistair did the same.

“I’ll see you for breakfast, but I’m afraid we won’t speak much - I’ll be accosted by all the nobles
who couldn’t wait to see me. Maybe I’ll already get a marriage offer,” Alistair told him as they were
walking back out on the balcony.

“Don’t go accepting any.”

“That an order, Commander?”

“More of a suggestion. But something tells me that after a night like that you’ll be thinking about
nothing but us.”

“I’d say you’re cocky, but you’re absolutely right. I can’t wait until we’ll have a bit of time together
in the day.”

“Me neither.”

They stood still for a moment, and before they parted, Cullen kissed Alistair quickly. He was kissing
a man, in broad daylight, in Kirkwall. He has certainly changed, and he couldn’t have imagined a
better transformation.

Just as Alistair predicted, during breakfast his entire attention was claimed by the nobility of
Kirkwall. The rest of the day wasn’t much better. All three of them were forced to suffer through
various meetings and cordial meals. It was in the evening that they’ve managed to beg off further
engagements. Cullen claimed a headache, Alistair indigestion, while Evelyn had a convenient near
fainting. At last they met up on their shared balcony.
“Maker I’m exhausted.” Evelyn sighed. “Marchers are relentless with their own.”

“I hardly think I had it easier,” Alistair told her. “How many marriage proposals did you have?”

“Two so far.”

“So did I.”

“No-one wanted to marry me, but an elderly gentleman did proposition me,” Cullen told them, cringing at the memory.

“Should we be jealous?” Alistair asked, nudging Cullen.

“Somehow I resisted him.”

“That’s a relief.” Evelyn laughed. “So what should we do with this fine evening, now that we’re alone?”

“Varric told me you wanted to see the Hanged Man, Evelyn. So would I. Cullen, would it be too much for you?” Alistair asked. “And be honest. We don’t want to make you uncomfortable.”

“It will be alright. I’ve actually never been there either,” Cullen admitted.

“Never?!” Evelyn and Alistair exclaimed.

“I was not in the habit of visiting disreputable taverns.”

“You were such a good Chantry boy.” Evelyn patted his arm.

“With the emphasis on the past tense. Now I’ll be taking my two lovers to this very improper establishment. I assume we’re going incognito?”

“Definitely,” Evelyn agreed. “Cloaks and long boots it is. Varric told me of a rarely used servant’s entrance,” she informed them. “Meet me back here in twenty minutes and I’ll lead you. Cullen will take it from there.”

In less than thirty minutes they were on a High Town street, keeping to the shadows, in case some noble decided to take a late walk and recognized them despite their plain clothes and large hoods. They could look like thieves creeping in the night to rob someone, but it still felt safer than just casually strolling through the streets.

“Maker, I can’t wait till we get to Low Town and throw off those hoods - I can barely see,” Alistair complained.

“I don’t think taking the hoods off would be wise,” Cullen said, pausing before turning a corner.

“In those clothes, in Low Town, no-one will look at us twice,” Evelyn said, seeming to be in agreement with Alistair.

“I’ve lived in the city for over ten years, while you two are some of the most powerful people in Thedas. We’re already taking a large risk.” Cullen quicken his pace.

“You still have much to learn. You without your Templar armour, me without a crown and Evelyn without her entourage of nobles and the faithful, are unrecognizable to common people,” Alistair told him.
“Most people see symbols, not the actual human beings carrying them. I’m not saying that it’s impossible for us to be recognized, but the chances that someone from Low Town saw us at any point earlier are rather small, and the way we look now we could be just about anyone,” Evelyn added.

It did make a strange kind of sense, Cullen had to admit. Still he shook his head when they made to take of their hoods when they reached Low Town. One could never be too careful.

“You know, I wanted to do a bit of sightseeing on my previous visit, but Tegan insisted we had to get back as soon as possible, preferably without anyone knowing of our visit,” Alistair said.

“You were in Kirkwall before?” Now it was Evelyn and Cullen who exclaimed in shock together.

“Have I not mentioned that before? It was an awfully short visit. I’ve had a very unpleasant encounter with the Knight Commander, and promptly returned to Ferelden with my tail between my legs.”

“She never mentioned it.”

Cullen felt his fists clenching at his sides. He shouldn’t have been surprised. Meredith was distrustful of everyone and didn’t share anything that wasn’t absolutely necessary. But he wasn’t bothered by the fact that he hadn’t been let in on this secret all those years earlier. Simply thinking about Meredith soured his mood, pushing him back into the dark realm of anger and regret. He wasn’t angry with her. He was angry with himself for allowing her to exploit his fears, for trusting her, for not standing up to her earlier...

“I’m sorry I mentioned her. I didn’t mean to…” Alistair started, tentatively reaching out to place a hand on Cullen’s shoulder.

“I’m alright.” Or at least he tried to be. He’s already been through all this, it was behind him, for the most part. He wouldn’t allow this to ruin their night. “She made a wise choice. I’m sure I’d embarrass her by bowing to you excessively,” he added, trying for a light tone.

“That was probably for the best. Seeing a handsome Fereldan welcoming me so enthusiastically would probably end with me flirting with you in a decisively awkward manner, and then you’d die of blushing.”

“You’re not far off. I’d be ten kinds of confused and flustered. So let’s not dwell on that. We’re almost there.”

They went down a set of stairs, and by the light of a lamp hanging over the entrance saw someone retching.

“That’s exactly like Varric described it!” Evelyn enthused.

The doors opened, and another person exited, allowing the loud sounds from the tavern to spill out - drunken shouts, clinking of mugs, and some lively music.

“After you, my lady,” Alistair held the doors open for Evelyn.

“I think you shouldn’t be so polite here, or you’ll blow your cover,” Cullen admonished, smirking.

“He’s right. No more of this ‘my lady’ nonsense. You should probably call me a wench,” Evelyn added.
“Get in there, then, wench.”

Evelyn laughed at Alistair’s unconvincing tone, and all three of them made it inside. The tavern wasn’t completely packed, but there was quite a bit of people drinking at tables and milling about. The atmosphere was rather stifling and most people had their jackets unbuttoned and shirts opened at the throat. Cullen took off his hood, and Evelyn and Alistair followed. No-one gasped in recognition, no-one even stopped what they were doing, which was definitely a relief.

Cullen spotted an empty table in a corner and lead his lovers to it. It was conveniently out of the way, and not well lit, which Cullen considered great advantages. As they settled down, both Alistair and Evelyn were looking around, taking in all the, decidedly grimy, details of the decor.

“This brings back the memories of when I traveled with…” Alistair looked around suspiciously, “of when I took that big trip across Ferelden. It’s been so long since I smelled cheap alcohol and sweat.” He sighed, sounding almost nostalgic.

“I’ve never had the opportunity to visit seedy taverns,” Evelyn told them. “It’s certainly an experience, but I’m not sure I’d like to make it my permanent residence. Oh, but the barkeep is staring at us. We better order something.”

“I’ll get it,” Alistair offered, getting up.

“He didn’t even ask what we wanted.” Evelyn pursed her lips.

Cullen laughed, only getting more amused when he saw her confused expression. She was rather down to earth, and took to the rough conditions they had to endure while fighting Corypheus easily, which sometimes made Cullen forget that she was a noble lady, used to getting only the best of everything.

“In such places there isn’t much of a choice,” he explained.

“I’m so out of touch.” She shook her head.

“Not much of a wench.”

Evelyn was readying to respond, but Alistair was already back, carrying the ale.

“I sprung for the clean mugs,” he told them proudly.

Evelyn’s eyes went wide, but then she put on her brave face, and grabbed the mug.

“A toast,” she said. “To us, together, on a date night in the Hanged Man.”

“Date night,” Cullen and Alistair echoed.

They all took a large drink. Evelyn made a face as she swallowed, then pressed her lips and started to shake, evidently trying not to cough. Alistair started patting her back.

“Do you need water?” Cullen offered.

“N-no,” she whizzed out. “I’m fine,” she added in a steadier tone, before taking another drink. This time it seemed to have gone down easier, making Evelyn only wince slightly. “This is absolute swill,” she declared.

“You’re adorable,” Alistair told her fondly.
“I’m not!” she protested, taking another large gulp, then wiping her mouth with her sleeve. “I’ll be fine. I’ll drink you both under the table.”

“Please don’t try,” Cullen told her, laughing.

“You think I can’t?” Evelyn took another drink, eyeing Cullen the whole time.

“I’d hate to say you can’t do something, and yet…”

He wasn’t sure where he was going with this, and so it was something of a blessing when he was interrupted.

“Of all the seedy taverns, in all the cities in the Free Marches, and you walked into mine,” a low voice announced.

Cullen was confused for a moment, not able to recognize the voice, despite it sounding familiar. When he looked to the side, everything became clear. Next to their table stood none other than Isabela, one of Hawke’s companions. She looked just like Cullen remembered. She wore a short tunic, long boots, rich gold jewelry and her ever present daggers. Her eyes were as sharp as ever, and her smile as dangerous.

“Bela!” Alistair exclaimed enthusiastically. “I should’ve known you were going to be here. It’s so good to see you!”

“You never write, you never visit. It takes a Chantry opening ceremony to bring you here,” Isabela scolded. “Although, come to think of it, I don’t believe you’d come here just for that. Meeting old friends, I see.” Her widening grin and her tone made it clear she knew they were more than that. Cullen felt like throttling Varric for his large mouth. “But I’m being awfully rude. We haven’t met,” she said, turning to Evelyn. “I’m…”

“The great captain Isabela of Rivain,” Evelyn finished for her. “It’s a pleasure. I feel like I already know you after reading Varric’s books and talking to him.” She was looking Isabela over curiously, probably reconciling the reality with what she’s been told of the woman, smiling up at her.

“Aren’t you just the sweetest. I do know of you as well, but I suspect you wouldn’t wish me saying your name out loud here.”

“We’re incognito,” Evelyn responded in a low tone. “Join us, will you?”

“I wouldn’t be intruding on anything?” Isabela asked, arching a brow at them.

“I’d love to get to know the great pirate queen,” Evelyn responded, her enthusiasm clear.

“She’s just too darling. Not to mention pretty as a picture. Now aren’t you two just the luckiest?”

“We’re fully aware,” Alistair responded, moving to the side to make room for Isabela.

“You’re very silent, Curly,” Isabela observed, tilting her head and looking at Cullen.

“It’s been a while, Isabela,” he said cautiously. They had precious few interactions, and none of them unpleasant, but Cullen never knew what she truly thought of him.

“I like your new hair. And your new company,” Isabela said. “Time away from the city did you good. If someone were to tell me that I’d find the straight-laced, upstanding, Chantry attending man I knew, right here in the Hanged Man with his two lovers, I’d laugh in their face.”
“I would’ve done the same,” Cullen admitted. “It was a surprise for me too. But things happen…”

“Here’s to things happening.” Isabela made a toast, and they all joined her. “The lady doesn’t like the drink I see,” she said.

Evelyn blushed.

“Don’t worry, kitten. It’s all a matter of practice. We’ll make a proper tavern wench of you yet.”

“To proper tavern wenches then,” Evelyn said, laughing, before lifting her mug and taking a long pull, managing not to wince at the taste.

“Good girl,” Isabela praised, making Evelyn giggle. “Now tell me the story. Varric gave me the barest minimum of information, and I need to know everything. I may share some scandalous tales of my own in return.”

“We’ll need more ale for that,” Cullen muttered.

“Embarrassed?” Isabela laughed. “You can’t shock me. But I won’t say no to a drink.”

“I’ll get it,” Alistair offered.

“And rightly so.” Isabela got up, allowing him to make it to the bar, and slid back in, next to Evelyn. “I feel like we’ll be fast friends,” she said, lifting her hand to play with Evelyn’s long blond hair. “Two beautiful rogues who aren’t afraid to take what they want – a perfect match.”

“I’d like that a lot,” Evelyn responded with a broad smile, observing the other woman with obvious fascination. Then after a moment she said “I know you and Varric helped Al… our friend on his quest. I’d like to thank you for that. I wish I could’ve been there for him, but since that was impossible, I’m glad it was you with him.”

Cullen nodded in agreement. He remembered when Alistair told them of his search for his father, and Varric’s and Isabela’s involvement. His heart broke hearing of how Alistair at last met his father, only to lose him again. Being there with him would’ve been the best, but it was still good to know that he wasn’t alone.

“Don’t mention it.” Isabela waved her hand dismissively, her bracelets jangling lightly. “Let’s not speak of sad things. Did he ever told you that we’ve met when he traveled with… the warden?”

“He did,” Cullen confirmed.

“But he probably didn’t tell you how much of a blushing virgin he was back then. I swear, he was more red than even you,” she said, smiling at Cullen.

“Maker, don’t tell them about the Pearl,” Alistair pleaded, coming back with their mugs. “Don’t embarrass me in front of my friends.”

“Don’t you worry – something tells me they’d be your friends no matter what I tell them. They have that hopeless look about them.”

“I’ll still regret this.” Alistair sighed, passing the mugs around and sitting back down.

“Hush up,” Isabela told him. “So, it’s the middle of the day, which I suppose is the worst moment to be in a brothel, and in they come – a tall dark and handsome warden, a pretty but stuck up apostate, a hulking qunari and this huge delicious slab of awkwardness. I’m sure there wasn’t a part of him that
was free from blushing.”

“Come on!” Alistair interrupted, making Cullen and Evelyn laugh.

“Shhh, it’s my story. You’ll tell yours later. Where was I? Oh, right. The girls were immediately all over him, and the poor creature didn’t know where to look…”

Isabela continued her story, only occasionally interrupted by Alistair. Cullen found himself relaxing completely, laughing and drinking, enjoying finding out about those parts of Alistair’s past.

When Isabela was done, it was their turn to tell their tale. They never had to present an account of what happened between them, and Cullen wondered how to go about it, especially without giving out any details which could identify them to someone who’d happen to overhear them, but Evelyn and Alistair had no such worries – they talked over each other, from time to time asking Cullen for his input. He was a bit inebriated already, since the drinks flowed freely, and he wasn’t an objective party, but he liked what he heard. When he wasn’t embarrassed, he could appreciate the oddness of their situation, but also the romantic nature of their story. Despite having lived it, it still surprised him at times. This strange, improbable, wonderful set of events was his life.

Isabela seemed to appreciate the story as well, lifting her mug to them often, complementing Evelyn on her ingenuity, and reminding Alistair and Cullen how lucky they were. As if they could ever forget.

When they were done, Isabela, as promised, started telling them of her most daring adventures, in and outside of the bedroom.

After that they somehow ended up with Isabela whispering into Evelyn’s ear, and Evelyn responding yes or no, presumably telling the pirate whether or not they indulged in a particular act. Cullen should’ve been more embarrassed, but the drink and general mood of the place made him unable to feel such a thing, especially since most of Evelyn’s responses were affirmative, prompting Isabela to grin and toast the two men. Evelyn even whispered something to Isabela, making her laugh and pat Evelyn on the back.

From there, the night became a bit of a blur. Cullen knew they drunk more, laughed more, and then started singing. Isabela was teaching them some bawdy shanties, which they were picking up with shocking speed. Cullen was repeatedly complimented on his singing voice, and soon was leading half of the tavern in harmonizing.

At one point Evelyn and Isabela were dancing on the table, before Evelyn fell into Alistair’s lap with a laugh. After that, the king made the very wise executive decision that they needed to get back to the keep. For a moment Cullen wondered if he shouldn’t feel bad about not being the responsible one, but decided he deserved a break from being the proper, controlled one out of their trio.

They left the Hanged Man before dawn, when the horizon was just barely starting to brighten. Isabela, who without a doubt could hold her drink the best out of all of them, was kind enough to escort them. She had her arm securely around Evelyn’s middle, while Cullen flanked his lover from the other side. They were still in high spirits, occasionally starting a new song or drunkenly hiccupping, as they stumbled through Low Town.

Once they reached High Town, they were shushing each other, even in their drunken state conscious of the fact they needed to behave. Somehow they’ve made it to the secret entrance to the Keep, when Evelyn stopped dead in her tracks.

“I know what we must do!” she exclaimed. “We must visit Varric and sing to him. He misses
drunken singing, and we can give it to him.”

“That’s my girl!” Isabela grinned at her proudly. “I know where to find him.”

Cullen didn’t even protest. It probably wasn’t the wisest idea, the rational part of his mind whispered, but at the moment he told it to shove it. If Evelyn wanted to disturb Varric with terrible singing, then they were going to do it. Frankly, he himself wanted to do it – to annoy Varric or to prove that he could be unrestrained and fun, he couldn’t tell.

They’ve made it to Varric’s chambers without any obstacles, but guards were posted before the doors. They looked half asleep, yet turned alert when they heard footsteps, then started grinning when they noticed Isabela. The pirate exchanged some pleasantries with them, and they let the intruders right into Varric’s inner sanctum. It was almost too easy.

Once inside, they crept to Varric’s bedroom, and upon reaching the foot of his bed, busted into song. The viscount bolted upright, looking around wildly, before he understood the situation.

“This is my own damn fault. I asked for it, and I got it,” he said when they stopped singing. “And hello to you, Rivani. When did you get back into town?”

“Today, actually. Or rather yesterday. My timing was impeccable, as always. I happened to meet this enchanting creature and her two friends.”

“Aren’t we enchanting as well?” Alistair demanded.

“You’ll do.” Isabella laughed. “Now I think I’ll be getting back. Don’t expect me at your Chantry shindig, but do come to the Hanged Man, Varric. Let’s catch up.”

“Stay! Low Town’s far. Varric can find you a place to sleep here,” Evelyn protested.

“You’re sweet, but Low Town is my place. I wouldn’t sleep comfortably here. But don’t worry – you’ll see me again.” Isabela sauntered over to Evelyn and whispered something into her ear, which made Evelyn blush, kissed her on the cheek, and made for the doors. “I’ll see you as well.” She winked to Cullen and Alistair before disappearing.

“Let’s get you three to beds,” Varric decreed. “You smell sour and vile - like home.” He sighed. “Tomorrow it’ll be scrubbed from you. I’ll stall for you in the morning, but you have meetings to attend to.”

“Boooring,” Cullen whined drunkenly.

“You should get drunk more often, Curly.” Varric smirked at him. “Now off with you.”

Reluctantly, they allowed their host to lead them to their rooms, on the way performing another shaky rendition of a song about lusty mermaids.

Cullen didn’t remember falling into bed in his clothes, but that’s how he was woken up by a polite but firm servant. It was already late, he was informed, and he was in desperate need of a bath. He allowed the servant to push, pull and direct him, feeling decisively weak. His head was pounding fiercely. He gratefully accepted an offered potion, which helped somewhat, but he knew he was going to be nursing a powerful hangover for the rest of the day.

When he met his lovers and Varric for a belated breakfast, he saw the same tortured expressions on their faces, and yet neither of them complained. Maybe they should’ve been ashamed of their irresponsible drunkenness, but Cullen found that he could allow himself to let go of that. They had
the right to be stupid from time to time, and that was one of those times.

The hangover wasn’t helping during their meetings, which stretched into infinity, it felt like. It was days before they could think of having a bit more time together. There were quick moments in their rooms, but nothing long enough to be fully satisfying. Their days were full of meetings, and the evenings also featured “entertainment” at soirees, suppers and even something of a small ball. The only pleasant part of those days was the meeting with Avelin. Cullen always liked the serious and principled guardswoman, and that sentiment was shared by Alistair and Evelyn. Some nobles might have been offended at having been ignored in favor of her, but after a particularly boring day, all three of them decided they could live with that.

When they did manage to secure a free day, Alistair and Evelyn insisted Cullen take them hiking in the mountains surrounding Kirkwall. After the Dragon’s Peak, Cullen knew their feelings on mountains, and so doubly appreciated how they wanted to make him happy, taking part in one of his favorite pastimes, which to them was rather less enjoyable.

They set off early in the morning, followed by a small group of guards. That was something Cullen definitely didn’t have to contend with during his Templar days, but he knew they couldn’t sneak away alone all the time. To their credit, the guards kept a sensible distance, which allowed them to speak freely. Cullen recalled the pleasant days he’s spent in the mountains, now able to laugh at the memory of screaming to high heavens when a single animated corpse appeared next to his resting place or the time when some unknown creature stole his boots as he slept, forcing him to return barefoot to the city. He also showed Evelyn and Alistair where he first met Hawke and her party during his investigation. He didn’t even neglect to mention his misadventures in the Blooming Rose which preceded that event. Hearing about how Cullen was unable to speak normally to the girls working there probably made Alistair feel a bit better about his own awkward afternoon in the Pearl.

His lovers enjoyed his stories, and seemed to not suffer terribly as they climbed. Cullen did try to pick the easiest routes for them, which proved successful.

It was good to smell the fresh mountain air, with just a hint of salt from the sea in it, to be away from the city with its noise and heat, and maybe most importantly, to not be pestered with invitations to functions. The day of the opening ceremony was drawing near, and new guests were pouring in with each coming tide, which meant more mingling, more polite conversations and more tiny canapés, which Cullen grew to hate.

But for the moment they could stop in a clearing on the side of a mountain, spread a blanket and eat some hearty cold dishes, washing them down with strong wine. They could bask in the sun and guess at the shapes of the clouds passing above them. They could be silent for long stretches of time, comfortable without words after days filled with pointless talk.

And the night belong to them as well. Back in the keep, in Evelyn’s bed they could spend hours enjoying each-other’s bodies, unhurried, languorous, thorough.

The following days were again filled with duties, but they always managed to find a few moments to do something enjoyable – stargaze from the top of the keep, play chess or steal an annoying host’s prized wine bottle, which admittedly was mostly Evelyn’s doing, with Alistair and Cullen posted as guards, nervously looking around, afraid of getting caught.

The arrival of their friends was a pleasant diversion. Leliana and Josephine allowed themselves to be persuaded that Skyhold wasn’t going to fall apart without both of them present. Dorian traveled all the way from Minrathus, representing Tevinter. Bull was right by his side, since they too could use the trip as an excuse to see each other. Cassandra was of course the guest of honor, who was going to lead the faithful in prayer. It was still odd to see her in her white robes and tall hat. She herself
didn’t look entirely comfortable without her sword at her side, but despite that sounded rather enthusiastic about her work and seeing the Kirkwall Chantry rebuild. Even her conversations with Varric sounded entirely pleasant.

The actual ceremony in the Chantry was a terribly long and dull affair. Cullen hated to think of it in that way, understanding the gravity of the situation and wishing to praise the Maker for the successful turn of events in the city, and yet he couldn’t help stifling a yawn ever so often. It didn’t help that the previous night their merry band, with the addition of Avelin, Isabela and Merill, gathered to play Wicked Grace. It was supposed to last only three rounds, but somehow it turned into three more, and the night ran away from them. The only consolation was the fact that he managed to remain fully clothed this time.

The Chantry did look impressive, though. It retained the most essential characteristics of Kirkwall architecture, but at the same time it was modernized, felt more open and inviting, instead of imposing, with more natural light and less wailing figures. It was a new beginning, Cullen decided, and he like it.

The banquet that followed the ceremony was nothing if not lavish. Cullen didn’t even wish to think how much money was spent on the dishes piling high on giant tables spread over several large chambers in the keep. When he mentioned as much to Alistair, he was told to stop thinking and start eating. It proved a good advice.

Soon they were walking from chamber to chamber, sampling strange foods and observing their friends enjoying themselves. Cassandra and Avelin were deep in conversation, which vexed the faithful wishing for a moment of the Divine’s time. Merill was asking Josephin questions about Antiva. Isabela, who appeared despite not really being expected, and scandalized the guests with her daring dress, was laughing heartily with Dorian and Bull. Leliana and Varric seemed to be plotting something.

All in all the evening turned out rather pleasant. The best, and also most embarrassing, part was when one by one, Cullen, Evelyn and Alistair were pulled away from the festivities by their friends, only to be told that their excuses were made, and they could already get away to their chambers. The gesture was definitely appreciated, but it still made Cullen rather uneasy to know that so many people had insight into their private lives and even conspired together to get them alone, fully aware what they were going to be doing. Dorian, who was the one to pull Cullen away, was grinning in a very disconcerting manner, making Cullen uneasy. Leliana who lead Alistair to safety made the poor king blush fiercely. Only Evelyn, led by Isabela, seemed perfectly unperturbed, giggling at the pirate’s words.

Still, when he was falling asleep in the arms of the people he loved, after hearing their voices break on his name, Cullen couldn’t regret how they’ve found themselves in that position.

Unfortunately the passing of the ceremony meant that their time together was coming to a close. They didn’t speak of it, but he knew that just like he, Evelyn and Alistair were counting the days in their minds, seeking more and more excuses to be alone, shirking their duties, leaving their rooms later and returning to them earlier.

It was a week before they were to depart, that they’ve managed to get another full day all to themselves. Cullen and Alistair agreed easily when Evelyn begged that they spend it by the sea. They both knew how much she loved it.

“I still miss the Amaranthine ocean,” she told them as they were marching over the low hills towards a secluded beach Isabela told them about. “Seas are nice, there’s no doubt about that, but there’s nothing like the ocean – it’s so much bigger, wilder, more tempting. I would love to see it every day,
to smell the salt in the air, to feel it all around me as I swim.”

“Should we be jealous?” Alistair joked. “It sounds like you’re very passionate about it.”

“Come now, there’s no need for that,” Evelyn protested. “Although… If the ocean were a person it
would surely be incredible. Beautiful and powerful, mysterious and free. He’d be dangerous but
calming, wild but constant, fierce but playful. Irresistible.”

“I’m with Alistair now – we have cause to be jealous. You’ll just abandon us to live with the ocean,”
Cullen told her.

“You know I won’t. And not just because the ocean isn’t actually a person.” Evelyn laughed. “You
both have all those qualities I listed.”

“We’re mysterious?” Cullen questioned, skeptical.

“When you don’t know someone they are always a bit mysterious. And your resistance to my many
charms was very mysterious to me.”

“We’re not particularly dangerous,” Alistair declared.

“Are you joking? You’re a king and he’s a military leader, and you both wield a sword with great
skill. Maybe you’re not dangerous to me, but you can be to the outside world.”

“I think we’re mostly dangerous to your underclothes,” Cullen added, remembering a very flimsy
corset which instead of being unlaced ended up being torn.

“Don’t remind me.” Evelyn made a long suffering sigh. “But there we are!”

They turned a corner on a path they were following and saw the small stretch of sand, surrounded by
tall rocky cliffs, the waves lapping at it gently. The guards dutifully took their posts up on the rocks,
while the three of them went down to the beach.

“It’s very charming, just like Bela promised,” Evelyn commented happily.

Soon she was undressing and wading into the water for her first swim while Cullen and Alistair set
up the few provision they’ve taken, placing them under an overhang which provided some much
needed shade, hiding them from the hot Kirkwall sun. Once they were done, they sat, watching
Evelyn who was lying on her back, letting the waves rock her, perfectly at ease.

“Come on! Join me!” she shouted when she noticed them staring at her. And how could they resist?

It was definitely the laziest day they’ve spent together, just swimming, talking and eating,
ocasionally napping in the shade of the rocks. There was even a tiny cave nearby with a stream of
fresh water, which allowed them to clean the salt from their bodies.

They stayed there until it was dark, the bright stars blinking up on the inky sky above them. They
laid down, looking up at the vast expanse of the night sky. Evelyn pointed out the constellations to
them, familiar with them after her numerous experiences with astrarias. Cullen couldn’t exactly see
all the shapes she was describing, but that didn’t make the stars any less beautiful.

“I hate to ruin this perfect moment, but I’m not sure when we’ll get the chance to speak at length in
the upcoming days,” Alistair said, after a stretch of silence. “Time is running short and I can’t
imagine leaving without knowing when I’ll see you again. Do you have any ideas?”
Actually, I do,” Evelyn said, surprising Cullen. He was helping her in her movements towards the dissolution of the Inquisition, but that was something she hasn’t mentioned to him. “I’ve spoken with Josephine, Leliana and Cassandra, and they told me that an Exalted Council needs to be called. It will take place in the Winter Palace, since that’s close to the Divine’s seat. Orlais and Ferelden are vitally interested in the matter, since we operate on those territories, and so representatives of both have to be present. I know everyone wants to return to the status quo, without another powerful military organization between the two nations, but I want to be the one to make that proposition. I want my last act as the Inquisitor to be seen as fully mine, as me making a choice, not acquiescing to other’s demands. But that’s beside the point. We’re nearly ready, and as soon as we are, I’ll notify Cassandra, who’s going to call the Council. Then we’ll see each other, and after that… After that nothing will be keeping us apart.”

“That sounds perfect,” Alistair declared, joy evident in his voice.

“I didn’t know you’ve figured out such minute details already,” Cullen said, trying not to sound reproachful. He too was very happy to see their plans come to fruition, to finally live a little outside the confines of the Inquisition. At one point he’d surely be afraid of this much freedom, preferring order and security, but now he was glad for it.

“It wouldn’t have been a surprise if you did.”

Evelyn and her surprises. But he did like that one. He wanted to say something to that effect, when a guard’s voice, carrying from some way away, stopped him.

“You Majesty, Lady Inquisitor, Commander Cullen, I hate to intrude, but it’s getting rather late and you said that you were going to attend Lady Georgiana’s soiree,” the guard told them.

“Stupid lady Georgiana,” Evelyn muttered. “I completely forgot about her. I was hoping we could celebrate my news on our own tonight. No matter – we’ll get to that later. Let’s go.”

“We’re coming!” Alistair called out to the guard.

Cullen had a notion as to what kind of celebration Evelyn had in mind, and was disappointed it was not to happen that night. Together they’ve made some preparations, and he was eager to see how it was all going to turn out.

They were back in Kirkwall, washed and redressed after the long day, sipping some odd wine with bubbles in it, which was supposed to be the new delicacy, when Cullen’s suspicions as to Evelyn’s intentions were confirmed.

“I’d love it if you could join us for an evening tomorrow, Your Majesty,” a noble with a Nevarran accent told Alistair.

“I’m afraid the king will be rather tied up tomorrow,” Evelyn responded with a completely calm expression.

Cullen lifted a glass of the strange liquid to that.

Chapter End Notes

And on that unsubtle note, we end the non-smut chapter, which proceeds the 100%
smut chapter. You know what's coming. And it's coming pretty soon - the chapter is done. I just have to gather my courage and re-read it.

Anyway, I've noticed that with this chapter I'm passing the 100K word mark, and it kind of blows my mind. I never expected that this would be so long. Also, it's been over a year since I started posting. Thank you for sticking with my story. It really means a great deal. As always, comments and kudos are very much appreciated.
Alistair sighed and looked around the room again. It was rather bare - no windows, one set of doors, and bare brick walls, illuminated by a few scattered candles. The only furnishings were a bed he was currently sitting on, a small bedside table, and a chair, all made of plain wood.

He tested his bonds once more. His wrists were behind his back, encircled several times with thick rope. It was tight, yet not painful. He was no expert, but it felt like a solid job.

Without a clock, he couldn't tell how long he's been sitting there. It was a bit disconcerting, which he supposed was the point. His anticipation was building, and any distant sound made him alert. He shivered slightly. It wasn’t actually cold, but he wasn’t wearing a shirt, which made him feel the temperature more acutely.

He knew what was going to happen, in general, but the specifics were going to be a surprise. He wondered how Evelyn felt when she was in such a position, and how she now liked the reversal.

It was all going to be fine, he knew. The last time it went swimmingly. Evelyn was more than happy, and despite it not really being in line with his inclinations, Alistair enjoyed playing his role. He was rather proud of how he did, staying in character the whole time, not laughing or stuttering nervously.

The sound of a key turning in the lock made him jump up to his feet. He swallowed past the nervous lump that has lodged in his throat, as the door fell open.

Evelyn was the first to stride in. She's never looked more roguish, wearing leather pants and a loose linen tunic, her hair in a messy knot. There was something predatory in the flash of teeth as she smirked at him, leaning against a wall casually, hands in the pockets of her pants.

Cullen locked the doors behind them, before joining Evelyn. He was dressed similarly to her - in leather and linens, without his customary armor. He even carried himself differently, his movements less controlled, lighter. He crossed his arms over his chest and looked Alistair over from his feet to the top of his head, as if he was appraising him. Alistair felt himself squirming under the scrutiny.

"No-one wants to pay for you," Cullen announced.

"That's what I've been telling you from the start. But noooo, you couldn't just believe me." Alistair rolled his eyes.

"There's not much room for trust in our line of work," Evelyn told him. "But you were telling the truth."

There was a moment of silence.

"Are you going to let me go then?" Alistair asked, his voice hopeful.

Evelyn laughed heartily at his words, while Cullen just shook his head.

"That would be far too easy," Evelyn said, after her laughter subsided.

"It took a lot of time and effort, procuring and keeping you, not to mention trying to find someone to
pay the ransom. We can't just let you go without getting anything out of this," Cullen explained.

Alistair swallowed audibly.

"And what would you... uh... like to get out of me?"

"We're still trying to figure that one out," Evelyn supplied. "Is there anything you'd like to offer us?"

"I can fight, but I don't think you'd give me a sword."

"What an astute observation." Cullen's tone was mocking.

"I'm not really good at much else. I can't mend clothes, my cooking has been said to taste worse than dirt in the Anderfels, and I never had any place to clean. I could maybe amuse you by telling jokes. There's this one about a Chantry sister, a mage and a qunari..."

"I don't think a jester is what we're looking for," Cullen said, cutting him off.

"You're not thinking of selling me, are you?" Alistair asked, shrinking back.

"Maker's breath! We're mercenaries, not slavers." Cullen sounded offended.

"Well, that's a relief."

"Even if it were something we did, I would not want to sell him," Evelyn said.

"And why is that?"

"For one," Evelyn pushed herself off the wall, and walked up to Alistair, "he's pretty."

Alistair felt his cheeks heating up.

"I don't think I'd call myself pretty," he countered. "Devastatingly handsome is more like it, but I guess I'm the one with my hands bound, so my opinion isn't really important."

"No, it really isn't." Evelyn smiled up at him, her hand reaching up to cup his cheek. Alistair felt himself shivering at the touch.

"So what would you want to do with me and my prettiness?" Alistair continued.

"I think you know very well." Evelyn's hand was moving down his chest slowly.

"You're fine with this?" Alistair asked Cullen, who remained silent.

"It may be the only use we'll find for you," Cullen responded.

"I thought you were together," Alistair responded, still acutely aware of Evelyn's hand, now tracing the ridges of his stomach.

"That we are," Cullen confirmed.

"And you have no problem with your woman amusing herself with another man?"

Evelyn chuckled at his words.

"None whatsoever," Cullen responded calmly. "If we weren't so pressed for time, she would've had you back in that tavern where we met."
"It would've been so much fun. I thought we've gotten lucky with an attractive mark such as yourself," Evelyn told him. "You were staring at me from the moment I walked in. You were so easy and eager. Just one mug of ale and we were on the way to my room. How I would've enjoyed myself if we had the entire night. I liked the way you kissed me, how hungry you were. And you have such large hands - that's always good in a man. But we didn't have the time. I had to use that sleeping potion right away. What a shame." She sighed. "But there's time enough now to make up for that."

"And that would've been alright by you? You would've just waited in another room while I fucked her?" Alistair continued questioning Cullen.

"Waited?" A sly grin spread over Cullen's face. "I would've watched."

Alistair gasped.

"Shocked?" Evelyn asked, walking her fingers back up Alistair's chest.

"Well, yes. Shocked by the potential invasion of my privacy. And you know, the other thing."

"We're not exactly... conventional," Evelyn explained. "He likes to watch me, and I like to watch him too. With women or men," she added. It was probably supposed to sound offhanded, but Alistair knew how deliberate the comment was.

"Men?" he asked in a hushed voice.

"Mmm-hm," Evelyn confirmed. "Did we shock you again?"

It was Alistair’s turn to laugh.

“I’d say I’m surprised, not shocked. That particular thing cannot shock me. You could’ve flipped a coin to decide who would seduce me in that Maker forsaken tavern, and it wouldn’t have made a difference.” He tried to shrug, and found it a bit difficult with his hands bound.

Cullen crossed the small space and stood in front of Alistair, his head tilted, looking contemplative.

“That’s an interesting new information,” he said.

“And suddenly my plan sounds more appealing than before, doesn’t it?” Evelyn moved next to Cullen, running her fingers through his hair absentmindedly and smiling at him.

“Can’t say that doesn’t change my mind somewhat,” Cullen confirmed, leaning into her touch. “So if I were to sit down at your table, order you something cheap and strong to drink, and invite you into my room, you’d go with me?”

“Knowing what I know now about the whole kidnapping business, I would not,” Alistair responded, “but without the benefit of hindsight, I’d say you’d have yourself someone to warm your bed without much effort.”

“Then maybe this whole debacle could turn out to be a good thing.” Cullen looked rather pleased.

“Are you going to force me then?” Alistair demanded, trying to sound defiant.

“Force you?!” Evelyn looked appalled by the idea. “What made you think we’d do that? I thought we were getting along so well.”

“Well…” Alistair wanted to cross his arms, but found himself unable to do that. “You’re mercenary
bandits who kidnap people, so that wouldn’t be a huge leap.”

“That’s just business. We don’t harm people. We just want coin, and failing that, some other form of recompense,” Evelyn explained.

“And we’ve never had a situation when we were so mistaken about a target’s value, so this is fairly new to us,” Cullen added. “But as we’ve already said, we can’t just let you go. And I got the distinct impression that performing some… services in return for your freedom wouldn’t be terribly distasteful to you.”

“If we all met under different circumstances, just three people in a tavern, looking for a good time, no kidnappings planned, I’d be glad to perform any services.” Alistair looked from Evelyn to Cullen, his eyes raking over their bodies, fairly well exposed in their garments. “But knowing who you are, what you did, to me and probably dozens of other people…”

“And you have some moral qualms about sex with kidnappers?” Evelyn laughed like it sounded absurd to her.

“As a matter of fact I do.” Alistair lifted his chin up proudly.

“The way I see it, you have two choices.” Cullen grabbed his chin with his rough fingers, and made Alistair look right at him. “You do this, we’re happy and we let you go, or you tend the horses and learn to clean for however long we think is appropriate. The decision is up to you.”

“Not much of a choices, is it?” Alistair snorted. “And what if I’ll perform so admirably you’ll not want to let me go?”

“Someone thinks very highly of himself.” Cullen pinched his chin, and laughed.

“I don’t think you’ll trust our word that we’ll let you go after one night, but that’s a gamble you need to take.”

“So what would I have to do?” Alistair asked, trying to sound resigned.

“What we tell you to.” Cullen smirked. “Come now, don’t pretend like it’s such an abhorrent proposition. Forget your misguided morality. You know you want to do it. You know you want to finish what you started in that tavern. If I were in your shoes I’d jump at the chance to be with her.” He embraced Evelyn, squeezing the flare of her hips and looking at her appreciatively.

Alistair stayed silent for a long moment, trying to appear like he was truly struggling with the decision.

“Very well then.” He sighed. “I’m yours to command for the night.”

“You don’t sound very enthusiastic,” Evelyn observed. She stepped closer, her hand shooting out to palm at Alistair’s half hard cock. “But it doesn’t feel like you’re unhappy with the prospect.” She stroked him firmly, and Alistair stifled a moan.

Cullen traced the path over the middle of his chest and down his stomach, his hand finally joining Evelyn’s, and Alistair couldn’t hold back a groan.

“It seems your cock isn’t so moralistic,” Cullen commented. “I think you like this. I think you enjoy taking orders, being told what to do, not being in control. I think a part of you wants to thank your lucky star you were in that tavern, that we got you here, that we’re going to use you.”
Alistair bit his lip, not wanting to show how those words were affecting him.

Cullen placed his hand on Alistair’s face, pulling his lower lip from between his teeth, and pushed his thumb into Alistair’s mouth. Without hesitation, Alistair licked at the digit, and watched a smug smile spread over Cullen’s face. He felt Evelyn letting go of him and stepping back, but his main focus was on Cullen, who moved his hand lower, wrapping his long fingers around Alistair’s throat. Alistair swallowed and knew Cullen had to feel the movement against his palm.

They looked at each other for a moment before Cullen pressed the heel of his hand against Alistair’s sternum. He didn’t have to say anything, the command was implicit, and Alistair obeyed, slowly sinking to his knees. He felt slightly unsteady with his hands behind his back.

“Maybe you could untie me?” he asked. “I could use my hands.”

“I don’t think so. I like you like this.” Cullen ran his hand over Alistair’s arm. “What do you think, Evelyn?”

“I like what I see,” she responded. “You’re just going to have to work harder with your mouth to make up for the lack of hands.”

“That settles it then.”

Cullen yanked his tunic over his head and threw it to the floor. No matter how many times Alistair’s seen it before, it still made his pulse beat faster. He loved watching Cullen’s muscles shifting as he moved.

“Enjoying the view?”

Alistair pointedly looked away.

“There’s no need to pretend. You’ve already admitted that you find me attractive. I’m sure you like looking up at me like this from your knees.”

It was a losing battle that Alastair was fighting, trying not to stare, not to agree, not to show enthusiasm. He didn’t say anything because he was afraid all that would spill from his mouth would be shameless pleas. Instead he watched as Cullen unbuckled his belt and loosened the laces of his leather breeches.

Alistair licked his lips unconsciously. He didn’t mean to do it, it was just a quick little gesture, but Cullen noticed.

“You want to do it, you want to work off your debt with that mouth of yours.” Cullen sounded like he was very pleased as he reached into his breeches and pulled out his erection. He gave himself a languid stroke, looking at Alistair, waiting for his reaction.

Alistair’s hands itched to touch him. He struggled futilely against the rope, feeling himself pitching forward a bit.

Cullen reached out and tangled his hand in Alistair’s hair. Alistair thought he was going to guide him, but instead all he did was lightly scratch his nails over Alistair’s scalp.

“Just admit it. I want to hear you say you want this.” Cullen moved his hand over himself deliberately.

Alistair clamped his mouth shut in defiance.
Cullen’s hand in his hair stilled, then gave a slight yank.

“We can always stop this,” Evelyn said. “Leave you here. Just know that the second those doors close behind us, I’ll be the one sucking him off, and you’ll get to hear everything, but do nothing.”

She started walking and Cullen pulled away a fraction.

“Stop!” Alistair almost shouted. “I want this. I want your cock in my mouth. I want to give you all I’m worth.”

“Was that so hard?” Cullen demanded.

He apparently wasn’t looking for an actual answer this time, because he pulled Alistair closer, the hand at the back of his head anchoring him in place. Alistair parted his lips, and his tongue stretched out to lick the drop of precome from the tip of Cullen’s erection.

“I’m in no mood for teasing,” Cullen warned.

“Maybe I am,” Alistair shot back, straightening his spine and staring up at Cullen.

“I think we’ve established that what you want is not a priority here. Now get to work.”

The grip on Alistair's hair tightened, but Cullen wasn’t pulling him closer. He knew he had to move himself, to show that he was going to do what was demanded of him. He inched closer with deliberate slowness, trying to keep Cullen on edge, even if every instinct was telling him to follow his order swiftly and without question.

His lips were hovering over the tip of Cullen’s cock for what, to him, felt like an impossibly long time, before he opened his mouth, and then the game was over. Cullen wasn’t having any of his stalling.

Fingers were pressing into the back of Alistair’s skull with insistent pressure, and there was no resisting anymore. Soon he had almost all of Cullen’s cock in his mouth, the tip nudging the back of his throat. He fit his tongue to the underside, moving it as much as he was able, and was rewarded with a groan.

He was about to pull back, but before he could do that, Cullen was doing it for him. In his position, on his knees, with his hands bound behind his back, Alistair’s mobility and balance were severely limited. He was being pushed and pulled, with almost no action required on his part. All he could control was his tongue, which he employed as best he could, enjoying the sounds Cullen made. He looked up at him, watching him, watching himself being watched.

“Good,” Cullen said, staring him in the eye. “You’re good when you let go, when you stop trying to struggle, to deny what you want. Isn’t it better that way? Isn’t it better to do as you’re told, to give up and give in?”

Alistair couldn’t very well answer him, but he did make an affirmative sound. He felt his lips getting a bit swollen, his jaw tiring, as Cullen keep thrusting into his mouth. He knew he could stop at any moment. And this was the best part. He could, but he didn’t want to. His mind was calm. Or as calm as it was possible while at the same time being aroused. He didn’t have to decide on anything, not even how to move his head. It was relaxing, it was exciting.

“I knew you’d look good like this, kneeling, your mouth full of cock,” Cullen observed, keeping his hard pace. “Wouldn’t you agree, my dear?”
“He most certainly presents a pretty sight,” Evelyn agreed.

Alistair was aware she was there, but being reminded of that fact so blatantly was a rush. Being seen like this, by her, added another layer to the experience.

“I want to keep watching you with him, to see what you’ll do with him, but it also makes me so eager to get my hands on him, to use him myself after you’re done with him."

Alistair cast a questioning glance in Evelyn’s direction.

“Don’t get distracted,” she chastised him.

Alistair refocused his entire attention back on Cullen, relaxing his throat muscles, allowing him to go as deep as he could. Cullen’s breathing was harsh, and it send another bolt of arousal through Alistair. He saw Cullen’s eyes drifting shut at times, but then snapping back open. He was in control, of himself as much as Alistair, strong and powerful. Alistair knew his own strength, and finding someone to match him, to overpower him at times, was thrilling.

There was the bitter taste of precome at the back of his throat, and Alistair hummed.

“I’m going to come into your mouth and I want to see you swallow,” Cullen told him.

Instead of trying to agree, Alistair flexed his tongue, massaging his cock. He knew it was going to be enough. Cullen made two more quick thrusts, before his grip on Alistair’s hair tightened and then he was spilling himself down his throat. Working his throat quickly, Alistair still managed to observe Cullen, who struggled to keep his eyes open and watch, like he said he would. He kept groaning through his orgasm, and Alistair felt like the sound was reverberating through him as well.

When he was done, Cullen dragged his softening cock from Alistair’s mouth, and almost gently wiped a stray drop of come from his lip, before letting go of him, and stepping away. Alistair swayed slightly on his knees, but he didn’t even have to try to keep his balance, because Evelyn was in front of him, her small hands steadying him with a touch to his shoulders.

Without a word she helped him up, and started untying the fastenings at the front of his breeches. Alistair was surprised at the turn of events, but he wasn’t going to protest. His cock was aching for release, and he wouldn’t say no to finding it in Evelyn’s warm wet cunt. He stepped out of his breeches when they pooled at his feet, and made for the bed, but Evelyn halted him with a hand at his chest.

“Not so fast,” she said, and Alistair stilled.

He watched with rapt attention as she took of her simple tunic and then a plain breastband. He wanted to touch her breasts and those tempting pink nipples, but he knew his arms would remain where they were. Maybe she’d allow him to use his mouth, to lick those stiff peaks…

In a flash, Evelyn’s breeches and smalls joined the pile of clothes on the floor, and she was sitting at the edge of the bed. Alistair begun to move again, but she shook her head.

“On your knees,” she said, and the tone of her voice made him want to obey instantly, but he resisted.

“I’m not sure how I can fuck you like this,” he protested.

“Who said you’re going to fuck me?”
“I thought we were going to finish what we started back in the tavern…”

“Maybe we are. At some point. But you said that you were ours to command, and now I tell you to get back down on your knees.”

He felt Cullen’s presence behind himself, and then there were warm hands on his shoulder, not yet pushing him, just touching.

“You were doing so well. Don’t screw it up now,” Cullen advised.

With a sigh that was supposed to be long suffering, but probably ended up more excited, Alistair sank to his knees.

“Come closer,” Evelyn told him. She spread her legs open, and Alistair pushed himself the scant distance to kneel between her spread thighs. Her folds were already glistening with moisture.

“Enjoyed yourself watching us, have you?” Alistair smirked.

“I’ve already mentioned that,” she responded dismissively. “But I’m going to enjoy this even more.”

Her hand went to Alistair’s hair. He expected her to pull his head down to her cunt, but she surprised him, guiding him to her breast. Not questioning her decision, he parted his lips and started licking at her nipple. Her nails dug into his scalp lightly, and Alistair closed his mouth around the peak, beginning to suck. Evelyn made a little sighing sound before pushing him over to her other breast. He tended to it with equal enthusiasm, employing all the tricks he knew made her cry out. If he had his hands free he would be already bringing her to climax, but as it were, he felt frustrated with his inability to touch her.

Evelyn probably shared that feeling, because she was soon pushing his head down, gasping when his teeth scraped over her nipple. Despite his earlier impatience, he tried to tease her, moving slowly over her stomach, but just like Cullen, Evelyn wasn’t having any of it. One of her hands was on his head, and the other on his shoulder, pushing him. He could resist - she could never match his sheer strength, but that was not the point.

Alistair sat down on his hunches, his mouth hovering over her navel, warm breath on the curls of her sex. He looked up the length of her body, marveling once again at the soft curves he wished he could run his hands over.

“Are you going to just stare all night?” Evelyn asked archly. “After I saw you with Cullen I’m eager to find out if you can please a woman as well as a man.”

“Do you doubt me?”

“You should use that mouth of yours for something more productive than questioning me.”

Evelyn placed one of her legs on his shoulder, bending it and digging the heel of her foot into his back. Her hand drifted over his head, her fingers tangling in the short hair at the nape of his neck, and Alistair couldn’t hold back any more.

“You’ll see you shouldn’t have doubted me,” he said, before his mouth found its way to her center.

He took a long lick from her entrance up and around her most sensitive spot, not touching it yet. She shifted her hips, and he repeated his motion. He could feel her annoyance in the way she yanked at his hair, making his scalp prickle. Not ready to give in quite yet, he thrust his tongue inside of her, flexing it. She started panting, her free hand reaching for his arm, nails digging in.
Alistair wished he could have his hands free, to stretch her with his fingers as his tongue and mouth attended to that spot at the top of her sex. Futilely, he moved his arms, trying to rub his wrists against each other.

“Those are not coming off,” Cullen informed him matter-of-factly.

Alistair wanted to turn to glare at him, but his movement was halted, as Evelyn held him in place. Still, his tongue slipped out of her, now running over her folds slowly.

“There’s no need to look at me. The most important thing is right in front of you,” Cullen instructed. “If you must know, I’m sitting on the chair, running a hand over my cock. It gets me hard, watching her being pleased by another man, and seeing you from this angle, on your knees for her, your arse on perfect display for me. Maybe I’ll fuck you later."

Alistair couldn’t stop the moan that burst from his chest.

“He’d like that,” Evelyn observed. “He’d had your cock in his mouth, and now he’s eager to feel it elsewhere. But it’s my turn now.”

She pressed her leg into his back, and Alistair eagerly plunged his tongue back into her, fucking her with it, delighting in the broken moans she was making. He loved to hear Evelyn and Cullen talking like this, and he loved the taste, smell and feeling of Evelyn’s cunt. It was almost too much. He felt his cock throbbing insistently, but he tried to ignore it, focusing on her.

“Make her come. Now,” Cullen ordered. “I know she’s must’ve been wet and waiting ever since she watched you suck my cock.”

“I was,” Evelyn confirmed, pulling on Alistair’s hair, trying to bring him up.

After hearing that, Alistair couldn’t do anything, but obediently remove his tongue from her entrance, and move it up to the center of her pleasure, flicking the pointed tip of his tongue against it rapidly. Evelyn wailed, her fingers on him squeezing and releasing rhythmically. She was hovering on the edge of orgasm, and Alistair glanced up to see her face, contorted in pleasure and anticipation, her eyes close, her mouth open. How he loved seeing her like this, in the throes of passion.

He closed his lips over her nub, sucking insistently, and felt her shatter, relies overtaking her. He kept sucking as she wordlessly called out, her back bowed, her perfect tits swaying with her movement. She rode that wave of pleasure until it was apparently too much, and she pulled him away by the hair.

Their eyes met, as hers drifted open, a bit hazy. Her leg slid from his shoulder, and Alistair made to lay his head on her thigh, but his movement was stopped. Cullen yanked at his bond, forcing him up to his feet, as Evelyn situated herself fully on the bed. There it was again, that strength he admired so much. He hoped Cullen was going to touch him, because his cock was throbbing with need.

Unfortunately Cullen apparently had no such intention. Instead, he moved Alistair back, then stepped around to face him, and gave his chest a shove. For a split second Alistair feared falling, but he found himself sitting at the edge of the chair.

“What now?” he asked. “I’ve pleased you both. Don’t I get a boon or something?”

“I don’t know. Do you?” Cullen responded.

Alistair wanted to stare at him murderously, but as his eyes raked over his nude form, those perfectly honed muscles, dotted with perspiration, and his cock, thick and hard again, he could only manage a
look of longing.

“Did he please you, Evelyn?” Cullen continued.

“Yes. He did not lie. He can please a woman,” Evelyn answered, a lazy smile on her face.

“See?” Alistair knew he had to sound smug.

“All right then. You performed well. But watching you two made me want to have her myself. You’ll have to wait,” Cullen informed him, throwing him a smirk, before striding to the bed.

Alistair groaned. His cock was aching, and he wondered if he wouldn’t just come like this. He didn’t want that, but it felt like a real possibility.

“You don’t like that plan?” Evelyn teased.

“No. Not one bit. I’m about to explode here,” Alistair complained.

“You’ll manage. You’ll come when I tell you that you can,” Cullen said, and Alistair believed him. He wouldn’t obey him, he couldn’t. He’d hold off as long as necessary, no matter how difficult that was going to be.

He stared with rapt attention as Cullen knelt on the bed and moved between Evelyn’s parted thighs. She lifted her arms up, placing them on Cullen’s shoulders and bringing him down to her. He went easily, starting to kiss her. Alistair was once again hit with how beautiful they looked together, clinging to each other, as close as possible. Still, he wished he could see more - the swell of Evelyn’s breasts, Cullen’s cock, which he was grinding against her. If he were to be only an observer, he wanted a good view.

As if reading his mind, Cullen pulled away, glanced in his direction, and then turning to Evelyn said “I think this won’t do. Get on your hands and knees.”

He moved to the end of the bed while Evelyn turned over, winking at Alistair. When she was positioned to Cullen’s satisfaction, he moved to her, kneeling behind her.

“You wish you could be here, don’t you? About to sink your cock into her,” Cullen taunted him, his fist around his cock, rubbing the head between Evelyn’s folds.

“Yes,” Alistair agreed breathlessly.

“Maybe you’ll be allowed to do that. Believe me, that’s a treat.”

Cullen grabbed Evelyn’s hip and started slowly pushing into her.

“She’s so wet. You made her this wet, ready for me.”

The praise made Alistair absurdly happy.

“But she wants more, always more.”

He retreated, and slammed back in, making Evelyn’s breasts sway with the movement, as her entire body was pushed forward. From his position, Alistair could perfectly observe as Cullen’s cock moved in and out of her cunt, shining with her wetness. Evelyn’s voice rose higher and higher as Cullen fucked her relentlessly, his pace getting ever quicker. Her arms were quivering under the strain, but she was pushing back, eager for every new thrust.
Alistair must have made some kind of sound, because they both turned their heads in his direction.

“Just look at him,” Cullen murmured, not ceasing his movements. “Look how he shakes and moans. He’s so desperate, sitting there with his cock hard and neglected. He’d take anything we’d give him and thank us.”

Alistair felt his hips thrusting subtly. If he wouldn’t come soon, he’d go mad. Pleasuring them, watching them together - it was too much for him to handle.

“He’d beg us, he’d plead for any scrap of attention,” Evelyn responded, grinning at Alistair.

A very undignified moan tore itself from Alistair’s throat, but at the moment dignity was very low on his list of priorities.

“Beg,” Cullen ordered, punctuating the statement with a particularly sharp thrust, which caused Evelyn to shout.

“Please,” Alistair said immediately.

“Put more feeling into it,” Evelyn commanded.

Alistair slid from his position on the chair to his knees, inching closer to the bed.

“Please, please, I’m begging you.” His voice was strained.

“Pease what?” Cullen questioned.


At the words Cullen stopped, and pulled out of Evelyn, making her gasp at the loss.

“He’s been very good, wouldn’t you say, love?” he asked her.

“Yes, very good and patient. He deserves his prize,” she agreed.

Alistair almost sobbed with relief at those words.

Cullen walked up to him and pulled him up to his feet. When he tilted his head up and kissed Alistair, it was the most shocking yet pleasurable surprise. The kiss was unexpectedly gentle - just a tender brush of lips, a complete contrast to his previous harsh treatment.

After pulling away, Cullen stepped back, moving towards the nightstand, quickly returning with a knife and a vial. The sight of both objects made Alistair groan in relief. Stepping behind him, Cullen cut at the bindings with a quick movements. Alistair’s hands fell free at his sides, and he felt blood rushing faster through them. He stood there, marveling at the sensation, unsure what to do, staring at Evelyn, who was again lying on her back.

“What are you waiting for?” Cullen asked. “Go on, fuck her. You’ve earned it.”

That was enough. Alistair all but threw himself at Evelyn. She accepted his onslaught eagerly, wrapping her arms around him, opening her legs further to accommodate him. Alistair wasted no time, slipping inside of her in one quick thrust, shouting in pure joy at the feeling of her cunt enveloping him. He started moving immediately, and took advantage of his free hands, running them over her torso, grasping her hips, playing with her breasts. It was as if he was touching her for the first time. Every sensation was incredibly intense, and he was drunk on it.
Before long the bed dipped behind him, and he felt Cullen touch him. He wanted to lean into that touch, but couldn’t imagine letting go of Evelyn. Luckily he didn’t have to do that. Cullen ran his hands up and down his back a few time before taking hold of his hip steadily. Alistair felt the tip of his slick cock at his entrance, but before he could beg for Cullen to please fuck him at last, his lover was doing just that, pushing into him slowly.

“Don’t hold back,” he pleaded in a hoarse voice. “I can take it. I need it.”

Cullen didn’t even ask him to beg for it, probably too far gone himself, just obliged, thrusting harder, pulling almost all the way out, before sinking in deep. Alistair groaned as he felt himself being stretched and filled, again and again, quickly and sharply, perfectly. Every one of Cullen’s thrusts was pushing Alistair into Evelyn as well, and it felt almost like they were one being, connected in such a profound way.

After all that’s happened, Alistair wasn’t sure he was going to last much longer. He’s been on edge for far too long, and now the new wave of sensations was threatening to overwhelm him. There was nothing quite like being inside the woman he loved, while the man he loved was inside of him.

“I’m so close,” he warned, his hand drifting between their bodies to find Evelyn’s pearl.

“Let go,” she told him. “I’m also… I’m…”

Cullen gave a sharp movement, angled just right, and Alistair couldn’t hold back anymore. He started coming, the pleasure slamming into him with unexpected force. He was shouting incoherently, his voice breaking as he felt Evelyn’s walls clenching around him. Almost immediately after that, Cullen was joining them as well, still moving within Alistair.

The sensation was crashing through him over and over. He wasn’t sure how long it lasted, but at last it was over, and he was being pulled back.

He found himself lying on his side, Cullen pressed to his back, Evelyn curled against his front. He couldn’t say anything just yet, focused on evening out his breathing, but he loved the feeling of their warm, slightly sweaty bodies so close to his.

“How are you?” Cullen asked, his hand gentle on Alistair’s side.

“Mmmm,” Alistair responded.

“Is that a good ‘mmmm’?” Evelyn questioned.

“Veeeeeeery gooooooood,” Alistair drawled. That was a silly question. He couldn’t remember ever feeling better. “I’ll be praising you relentlessly when my brain returns to normal. Now I’m not very coherent.”

“Coherent enough to say ‘coherent’.” Evelyn laughed. “Was it the way you imagined it?”

“Better. I love you. Now let me sleep for a bit. I’m very well used and tired.”

He pushed himself back into Cullen and wrapped an arm around Evelyn’s stomach, glad to be able to touch them fully. He knew they’d have to leave this place before morning, but for now he had to rest.

“Yes, let’s sleep a bit,” Cullen agreed, kissing his neck briefly. “We deserve it.”

Alistair murmured his assent before sleep claimed him.
Sooo... that happened. I hope this was all right. Writing it was fun, but now I'm super embarrassed. Still, the embarrassment doesn't stop me from having even dirtier ideas. For the next roleplay I'm thinking less bondage, and more blasphemy. I really want to get Chantry sex in this story. But that's for another day. In the meantime let me know what you think, will ya?
Alistair felt like he was going to wear a hole in the expensive Orlesian carpet with all his nervous pacing. Maker, when was the last time he was this worried? Sure, he had to face an archdemon in his time, but at the moment this felt even more monumental.

Both he and his lovers had arrived at the Winter Palace the previous day, but since then there wasn’t much time for them to spend alone between meetings with old friends and allies, a formal dinner and evening entertainments. It was unbearable, to be in the same room with them, but unable to touch them. All they could do was exchange a few polite sentences. He was constantly following them with his eyes over tables and across rooms. At one point Leliana met his gaze and gave him a warning look. Could everyone see how he stared at them? He tried to engage other guests in conversation, but his traitorous eyes kept sliding away.

It’s been too long since they were together. Any length of time would be like too much, but the last months were possibly the worst. Their letters, no matter how regular, were no substitute for their presence.

Whenever he felt his loneliness would overwhelm him, he thought back to the evening on the beach. He remembered how certain Evelyn sounded when she spoke of their future, how delighted Cullen was by the fact that she already had a plan for disbanding the Inquisition.

After that evening, they had only a few days together. They’ve spent almost every moment together, which still didn’t help when he stood at the docks, watching them sail away from him. They waved back at him, their reassuring smiles not reaching their eyes. He waved back for as long as he could see even the most vague shape of the ship on the horizon. The further away they were, the worse he felt. Love was damnably inconvenient at times.

But here they were, together again, in Orlais, which seemed fitting - it was in Orlais that their relationship truly begun.

They were to discuss the future of the Inquisition, but Alistair wasn’t thinking about that. The meeting of the representatives of the Inquisition, Chantry, Ferelden and Orlais was due to begin in an hour, and yet he spared it not a single thought. He knew what was going to happen, he wasn’t worried. What he was worried about was far more private, and far more important.

“What’s wrong my friend?”

Alistair jumped up at the sudden words. His back was to the balcony doors, and he quickly spun around to face the intruder, fully aware who he was going to see - the accent was unmistakable.

“Zevran, what are you doing here?” he demanded.

“That’s not much of a greeting, is it?” The assassin laughed.

“You scared me half to death!”

“I’ve been here for the past twenty minutes. It’s not my fault you were so distracted that my radiant beauty went unnoticed,” Zevran responded. “You mutter a lot, you know that?”
“I… I suppose I do. It’s nice to see you, Zevran, but your timing isn’t the best.”

“What’s troubling you?”

“Well… I… How much do you know? About the…” Alistair made a broad gesture encompassing himself and the nearby bed. It’s been awhile since he talked to Zevran, but he was fairly sure someone informed him of Alistair’s relationship. Probably Leliana. Or perhaps Isabela.

“Not nearly enough.” Zevran grinned. “I know that you, the lovely lady Trevelyan and her handsome Commander are involved, but I’m fuzzy on the details. I caught a glimpse of them on my way here, and I have to congratulate you - they’re quite the pair. Ah, to think that this blushing Templar virgin I met over ten years ago would grow up to be a king who beds two people at once - it brings a tear to my eye to think of how you’ve blossomed.” The assassin pretended to wipe his eyes.

Alistair rolled his eyes at him. Still, Zevran’s antics were allowing him to relax a bit.

“It’s not about bedding. It’s about more. It’s… you’ll laugh.”

“I swear on my honour…” Zevran stopped, probably seeing Alistair’s skeptical expression. “Trust me, I won’t…” The assassin sighed. “You wound me with that mocking smile. You can trust me. But barring that - you don’t have many options for confidants, I expect. So out with it.”

“Fine!” Alistair took a steadying breath. “I want to propose.”

Maker, that sounded even more serious when he heard it out loud. What was he getting himself into?

“Propose?” Zevran asked, clearly confused.

“Yes. Propose. Marriage. I want to propose. To them. And yes, I know that’s not exactly Chantry sanctioned. We wouldn’t have a big ceremony, but I thought that if Evelyn married me and Cullen came to be the commander of our armies, we’d never be apart. It’d be like a real marriage, with the three of us living under the same roof, making decisions together… But I’m not sure I should go through with it.” Alistair pressed his fingers to his temples, trying to massage the insistent dull throb away. He’s had this nervous headache for the longest time now. He couldn’t make his mind up and it was driving him half mad.

“Getting cold feet already?” Zevran questioned.

How could he misunderstand the situation so completely? That was the exact opposite of what Alistair was feeling.

“It’s not that. I want it. More than I ever wanted anything. But it’s not fair. To them. To be forever tied to me, having to share all my responsibilities, to never be able to live freely, away from prying eyes - how could I ask it of them? They could have a simple life, the two of them, together. With me things are never going to be simple.” He scrubbed a palm over his face. It’s been bothering him for weeks. His own selfishness in even contemplating asking for such a commitment, such a sacrifice.

“I do not understand. You think they’re going to refuse you?”

“No. I don’t think so. I’m fairly sure they’d agree. I just fear they’d grow to regret that decision. I couldn’t stand it, to know that I’ve made them miserable.”

“And why would they be miserable?”

“Why? Because their every move would be scrutinised. Because they’d never be free from nobles
constantly demanding their attention. Because they’d never have rest.”

“I think you could give them some rest from time to time.” Zevran smirked.

Alistair laughed despite himself.

“That’s not what I mean! Try to be serious for a moment!”

“Alright then. I’ll be serious. You love them, and you’re sure you want to spend the rest of your life with them, yes?”

“Yes.”

“And they also love you.”

Alistair nodded.

“And they’re both adults who can make decisions and are responsible for the consequences of their decisions?”

“Yes, but…”

“It’s their decision to make.” Alistair was opening his mouth, ready to protest, but Zevran cut him off. “They won’t regret it. You’re quite the catch.”

Alistair rolled his eyes.

“You’re a good man. I say it with all seriousness.” His friend did sound uncharacteristically solemn. “You’ll make them happy. You’ll devote your entire life to that goal, and you’ll achieve it. And they’ll also make you happy. You deserve it.”

The assassin’s words were surprisingly moving. Alistair definitely needed to hear something like that.

“We can make this work. We’ve been making it work for a long time now, and we’ll continue. Maybe it will even grow easier,” he said, half to himself.

“It will. They know what they’re getting into. And it’s worth it to them. You’re worth it. Any sane person, or persons, would see you’re worth it.”

“That means a lot, Zevran. Truly. I never expected I’d ever have this kind of genuinely touching moment with you.”

“Well, speaking of touching…”

“No! Zevran don’t…”

“If you feel like spicing things up…”

“Please, don’t ruin the moment…”

“I’d be happy to…”

“Don’t go there….”

“...lend a hand, or whatever else....”
“You did it! You ruined the moment!”

“I could bring Isabela with me.”

“It was such a nice moment. And you ruined it!”

Alistair shook his head, laughing despite himself. Of course Zevran wouldn’t allow such a moment to remain innocent.

“How could I’ve possibly ruined the moment? I’ve improved it. Isabela’s very fond of your future wife, you know.”

“Duly noted,” Alistair muttered. That was a first - none of their nosy friends ever actually tried to invite themselves into their bed. It was bound to be Zevran who’d change that. “I think it’s time for me to go. The Council meeting is about to start.”

“I’ll let that topic go. For now.” Zevran winked. “Now go. You’ll do fine.”

“Thank you, Zevran. For the emotional support. Not for the sexual advances.”

“At your service.” Zevran made an elaborate bow, and walked backwards on the balcony, before disappearing over the edge.

Alistair felt strangely lighter. Despite the terrible ending, the conversation with his old friend did make him feel better, alleviated his worries and finally allowed him to make up his mind. Now he could only hope he’d be able to find proper words to express what he felt. And of course he’d first have to make it through the political discussion. Maker, that was going to be so much more boring than usual.

He was one of the first people to reach the grand chamber where the negotiations were going to be taking place. Some courtiers were already milling about, while servants were making final preparations. His own retinue was by his side, probably rehearsing their anti-Inquisition arguments in their heads. He couldn’t tell them they were wasting their time. And even if he could, he probably wouldn’t - they should have something to occupy themselves with instead of plotting their petty courtly intrigues.

“You’re smiling,” Tegan said, almost accusingly.

“Am I? I guess I must be.”

“You’ve been very distant the past weeks. I know you weren’t listening to me, or anyone else, when we discussed today’s events. I hope you’re ready despite that.”

“I actually think I am.”

“Well, thank the Maker for that,” Tegan told him with a little dramatic sigh.

Alistair was only half listening to him. His advisor’s terse words couldn’t bother him now. He was in a world of his own, trying to prepare a speech he was going to make to Evelyn and Cullen. He had months to do that, and yet, consumed by his doubts, he never did it. Perhaps improvisation was going to be the way to go.

As he was turning different phrases over in his mind, the chamber began to fill. There was the buzz of excited voices all around him. Some of the new arrivals probably wished to talk to him, so Alistair picked up some parchments, which were placed on their table, and pretended to be studying them.
intently.

He wasn’t sure how long he’d been acting as if he were reading, when loud gasps forced him to look up. The sight that greeted him made him grin unabashedly. The Inquisition’s delegation has arrived, lead by Evelyn, who looked more radiant than ever. She was literally shining in a voluminous golden gown. The long sleeves, and bodice with almost scandalously low neckline, clung to her form tightly, while the skirt billowed out. The golden thread, sewn into intricate patterns, was catching the light. Her hair was down, cascading over her shoulders in gentle waves, an intricate golden band pushing it back. She looked like a queen, which was exactly what she was going to be.

Cullen followed behind her, no less regal in a more elaborate version of the traditional Inquisition formal wear. Instead of the bright red and blue colors, which Cullen called garish, the uniform was made in shades of cream and light brown, with golden buttons and trimmings.

Everyone was staring at them in awe, which filled Alistair with pride. ‘There goes my wife and husband,’ he thought.

Evelyn and Cullen made their way to his table, and Alistair scrambled up from his chair quickly, almost making it clutter to the ground.

“Your Highness.” Evelyn curtsied, her cleavage on perfect display as she did.

“Lady Inquisitor,” Alistair told her breasts. He should look up at her face, but he was momentarily distracted. When he did, he found her lips, painted a deep red, stretched in a knowing smile. Now it was Alistair’s cheeks turning red, without the help of any beauty products.

“My Liege.” Cullen, who greeted him next, had the same smile on his face.

“Ser Rutherford,” Alistair responded, once again pleased he could use that title.

Seeing them before him, looking more perfect that he thought possible, Alistair wished he could propose right on the spot. But this was not the time or the place, so he held his tongue, trying to think of something ordinary to say, and finding his mind empty. He was rescued from his predicament by the arrival of Divine Victoria, who fixed her unseasonably tall hat with a nervous little gesture, before ascending the dais.

Evelyn and Cullen bowed to him, and retreated to their own table.

Everyone stood as the Divine welcomed them, reading from a parchment. He didn’t know the woman well, but from what his lovers told him, she was not one for long flowery speeches, and making one was always an annoyance to her.

“Before we begin,” the Divine said said, nearing the end of her greeting, “I’ve been told the Inquisitor has a few words she’d like to say to us. Lady Trevelyan, if you please.”

Alistair turned to Evelyn, who remained standing as everyone else sat down.

“Thank you, Your Holiness,” she addressed the Divine. “And I’d like to thank everyone gathered here, for allowing me to break with protocol and speak so freely.” She turned, and inclined her head to Alistair and then the Orlesian ambassador. “We all know why we’re here. I’m sure both delegations have prepared their arguments and are ready to start the discussion, but I think I can save us all time.” She stopped, smiling slightly as people whispered and glanced around. She was enjoying their anticipation, Alistair knew. His wife-to-be liked holding all the cards. “It’s been my greatest honour to serve as the Inquisitor. I’m extremely proud of the organization I’ve built with the invaluable help and support of so many, and of the victories we’ve won. Having said that…” She
paused again, and the tension in the room reached unprecedented heights. Even Alistair, who knew what she was going to say, found himself holding his breath. “I believe it’s time for the Inquisition to disband.” There were shocked gasps, quickly muffled, followed by urgent whispering. Evelyn allowed it for a time, before clearing her throat lightly, making the crowd fall silent. “We’ve achieved what we set out to do. The world is safe, and needs us not. The great nations of Ferelden and Orlais can take care of any problems within their borders, with the wise guidance of our new Divine. Our aid is not necessary anymore. Since that question is out of the way, I believe we can move on to more practical matters of redistributing the Inquisition’s assets.”

With that, Evelyn sat back down with a satisfied smile on her face.

“Lady Inquisitor, isn’t this a bit too early…” the Orlesian ambassador started.

“The Inquisition wasn’t meant to last indefinitely,” Evelyn responded quickly. “We’ve accomplished our goals, and now can move on.”

“But…”

“I’ve made my decision, after having consulted the Divine. It is settled.”

“The Divine agreed to this?!” The ambassador sounded scandalised.

“That I did,” the woman in question responded. “Divine Justinia, my great predecessor, did not wish to sow discord by raising a new power, and only wanted to solve a problem. The problem in question was a different one, and yet after accomplishing what we set out to do, we have to let things return to their normal state. I’m sure you’re not saying, ambassador, that Orlais needs any external help?”

The ambassador was probably fuming behind his mask, but he said nothing.

For once Alistair was thoroughly enjoying a diplomatic meeting. Both the woman he loved and the Divine herself were putting Orlais in its place. Few things could be more satisfying.

“An excellent decision. We support it completely,” Tegan said, as pleased as if he actually made it happen.

“In that case I believe we should do as the Inquisitor suggested and discuss the details,” the Divine announced.

“We’ve taken the liberty of preparing a rough timeline and the list of all our assets,” Lady Josephine chimed in.

Servants in the Inquisition’s liveries started handing out documents. Alistair pushed them over to Tegan. This was it. The decision was made, and the political squabbling could begin. He was sure every coin in the coffers and every mount in the stables was going to be argued over, but he felt disinclined to participate. His people were more than prepared to go toe to toe with Orlais. He, meanwhile, could focus on trying to make the time to go faster.

During the ensuing negotiations, he kept glancing over at the Inquisition’s table. Evelyn and Cullen were looking back at him, and frankly he wasn’t certain who out of the three of them was happier. Every time Alistair tried to think of what he was going to say to them once they were alone, his mind would shut down, overwhelmed with joy and anticipation.

It felt almost miraculous when, at last, the Divine announced that they were going to break for lunch. Alistair instantly leaped to his feet. He wasn’t going to wait a moment longer. He strode to the
Inquisition’s table quickly.

“Lady Trevelyan, Ser Rutherford, I’d like to speak with you. Privately,” he told them.

Naturally lunch was the time when all the dignitaries continued their conversations in a more informal manner, mingling in the specially prepared dining rooms, but Alistair wasn’t going to stand around, eating tiny canapes and dodging questions about economics. He was going to propose.

“We have a room secured,” Leliana offered, seeming to have appeared out of thin air, startling Alistair. Nonetheless he was grateful to her for the timely intervention.

“Shall we go then?” Evelyn asked.

Leliana inclined to one of her people, who made for the doors, while Alistair, Evelyn and Cullen followed.

There was plenty of whispering as they were exiting into the corridor, instead of following other dignitaries into the adjacent dining hall. Tegan would not be pleased about the whole situation, but Alistair had bigger issues to think over.

His mind was made up, and yet he felt a bit of doubt returning. He wasn’t sure if the frantic beating of his heart was the result of excitement or nerves. He was going to go through with it, but he hoped Evelyn and Cullen wouldn’t have to revive him after he fainted first.

Leliana’s spy led them to a small room, which was rather sparsely decorated, at least for the Winter Palace. A table with refreshments and a large desk with writing implements dominated the space.

“You won’t be disturbed, Your Majesty, Lady Inquisitor, Commander,” the spy told them before making a small bow and exiting.

At last they were alone, and Alistair’s nerves redoubled.

“Wine?” he asked. “Would you like some wine? I know I’d like some wine.” He laughed nervously before walking to the table.

His hands might’ve shook a bit as he poured three very full glasses. Evelyn and Cullen accepted them, looking at him with concern.

Alistair took a large gulp of the wine, then another, then he wished it was a stronger spirit, but instead settled for a last mouthful. He put the empty glass on the side table and looked at his lovers, who hadn’t touched their drinks, and were regarding him worriedly.

“Are you alright?” Evelyn asked.

“I’m… I’m fine. Or at least I will be. I hope to be,” Alistair babbled.

“That’s not very reassuring,” Cullen told him cautiously.

“No, it’s… Don’t worry. It’s not bad. I don’t think it’s bad. But better put down those glasses,” he advised.

“Maker, Alistair, you’re really scaring me,” Evelyn said, her voice strained.

“It’s nothing to worry about,” he told them. “Just put down the glasses.”

Finally, they did, looking at him expectantly.
This was the moment. No turning back. He just had to do it.

“How do people do it normally?”

“Do what?” Cullen asked.

Alistair sighed. He didn’t realize he said that out loud.

“How do… Never mind.” With a sudden burst of inspiration, he went down on one knee.

He heard Evelyn gasp, and he was almost certain it was a good gasp.

“I’m not one for long speeches. Or at least not coherent and eloquent ones. I love you. You know that. So I hope that it will be enough, that I don’t need to convince you. You make me happy. Happier than I’ve ever thought possible. I know… I hope you feel the same way. And I hope you’ll want to continue… to feel that. For the rest of our lives, which could be pretty long for you, so make sure you think about it carefully before you answer my next question. W…”

“Yes,” Cullen said.

“You didn’t even let me finish!”

“Yes,” Evelyn told him.

“Are you sure you know what the question is?”

“Will you marry me,” Evelyn responded. “That was going to be the question. Unless I’m very much mistaken.”

“It’s pretty hard to misconstrue that.” Cullen pointed to the kneeling Alistair, and extended a hand to help him up. “Don’t ruin your knees proposing, you’re going to need them for the wedding night.”

Alistair laughed, accepting his hand and raising up. They agreed. He knew they would, and yet…

“I know you love me, but think it over. You’ll be a queen, Evelyn, and you’ll lead another army, Cullen. This will not be easy. This,” he indicated the three of them, “won’t be easy. You’ll be sacrificing a lot.”

“Are you trying to talk us out of this?” Evelyn asked, looking at him as if he’s lost his mind.

“No! I just want you to make an informed choice.”

“Love, we’ve already discussed it extensively,” Cullen told him. “Or rather we were wondering how to go about proposing to you if you were reluctant about doing it yourself.”

Alistair felt his mouth hang open for a few moments.

“You wanted to propose to me?” he asked in disbelief.

“We expected you’d have some qualms about it, thinking you’ll be dragging us into something we can’t handle,” Evelyn explained. “But we can handle anything, especially for you.” She placed her palm on his cheek tenderly, and Alistair worried his heart would explode from too many feelings.

“We just worried how we’d sound. It would be rather awkward, with us essentially demanding you make us your queen and commander,” Cullen added.
“I think that would sound perfect,” Alistair protested.

Evelyn and Cullen exchanged a glance, and then they were kneeling before him, Evelyn with some difficulty, trying to rein in her dress.

“You don’t have to…”

“Alistair,” Cullen started.

“Our love,” Evelyn continued.

“We’ve been apart for far too long…”

“And this separation must stop. Permanently.”

“We love you.”

“And we always will.”

“Marry us?” they asked together.

Alistair swallowed, then sniffed, and took a deep breath, trying not to cry.

“Yes,” he managed to say. “You’ve already said yes so… Yes!”

At his words, they were getting up quickly, grinning from ear to ear. Before he could say another word they were practically throwing themselves at him, embracing him with a strength that took his breath away.

They said yes. He said yes. He kept telling himself that over and over as he wrapped his arms around their bodies. This was how it was always going to be - the three of them, in one place, together. Maker, but he was lucky.

And then they were kissing him, and he felt infinitely luckier, and more breathless, as he kissed them back. Suddenly, he found himself pressed into the wall.

“Does the prospect of marriage excite you?” he asked teasingly when they broke apart.

“I think it’s more the fact that we’re finally alone. At least for me,” Evelyn responded. “You have my paint all over your face. And neck.” She laughed and tried to rub it off with her fingers. “Now I remember why I stopped painting my lips.”

“I feel very excluded, being the only unpainted one,” Cullen said.

Evelyn wasted no time, grabbing the back of his neck and kissing him soundly. When she pulled back, Cullen was equally red.

“Now we match,” he said.

Alistair stared on at his lovers with their stained faces and bright smiles, the sun shining on their light hair. He was always going to remember that moment, that perfect image, no matter how many years would pass. Before he could delve deeper into his thoughts, Cullen was kissing him again, while Evelyn’s hands roamed over his chest.

“We should eat before we have to return,” Alistair said, pulling away. “Maker, why am I the rational one now?”
They all laughed.

“You are being awfully rational. As your queen, I am telling you to stop it this very instant.”

“Queen Evelyn of Ferelden - that does have a nice ring to it,” Alistair observed.

“I told her the same thing. She’ll make a perfect queen,” Cullen agreed.

“And you’ll make a perfect commander. You won’t even be changing your title! I think it will take me some time to get used to being called a queen.”

“We’ll just have to help you, my queen,” Alistair told her.

“Yes. You’ll be very used to the title before you assume it, your highness.”

Evelyn rolled her eyes at them.

“Be careful - all that power may go to my head.”

“I think we’ll be able to handle you.”

With that, Alistair took hold of her waist and lifted her up, spinning her so that now she was the one pressed against the wall. She tried to wrap her legs around his waist, but her dress was making such a maneuver impossible.

“I thought your dress was beautiful, but I’m changing my mind about it,” Alistair complained.

“Well, I chose it because it makes me look powerful. I wasn’t considering how easy it’s going to be to hike it up,” Evelyn retorted, grabbing fistfuls of the heavy skirt, which kept slipping from her grasp.

Alistair was going to say that with the three of them together after such a long time apart it should’ve been her first consideration, but he stopped himself, as inspiration struck. He moved swiftly and placed Evelyn on the desk, scattering all the papers and quills.

“I don’t think that’s what they had in mind when they put this in here,” Evelyn said with a laugh, propping herself up on her elbows.

“There’s something about you on a desk,” Cullen told her, moving to stand next to Alistair.

“Is it me or do you perchance have a desk fetish?” Evelyn asked. She grabbed the folds of her dress and started to slowly pull it up, baring just a hint of calves.

“Definitely you,” Cullen said, before all but lunging at her, pushing the skirt all the way to her waist, making Evelyn gasp in surprise. Even her stockings were golden, Alistair noticed, and they contrasted with the pale skin of her thighs.

The heavy material tried to slide down her body. Having another moment of inspiration, Alistair pushed it into her hands, closing her fingers over it.

“How am I to touch you?” she complained.

“Not at all,” Cullen responded, clearly understanding Alistair’s intentions. It was still amazing to realize just how in tune they’ve become. “That’s your punishment for choosing such a dress.”

Evelyn seemed to think that over for a second, before grinning at them.
“Can’t argue with a good punishment. Now do your worst.” She spread her legs open in invitation. “But be warned. Turnabout’s fair play.”

“You never play fair,” Alistair told her.

“You wouldn’t want me to. But you’re wasting time just talking.”

As if on cue, both Alistair and Cullen reached for her flimsy silken knickers, and before she could protest, they were torn clean from her body. She’d complain, that was certain, but Cullen silenced her, bending down to kiss her. For a moment she hesitated, as if contemplating arguing, but in the end gave in, kissing him back.

Alistair couldn’t help himself any longer and stepped between her legs and gently pulled at her bodice, uncovering her pink nipples. He bend down and licked at the tight peak, pleased by the way she shuddered under him. His hips twitched in response and his cock rubbed against her mound.

Cullen pulled away from her to watch them for a moment, palming his erection through his breeches.

Evelyn’s hips were moving restlessly, but she didn’t appear fully satisfied.

“Your cock, my liege,” she murmured, “I need to feel it against me, without fabric in the way.”

Alistair was all too happy to oblige, pulling at his belt and laces.

“Touch me, Cullen,” she said, her tone a strange mixture of command and plea. “My breasts ache,” she added, pushing her chest out.

Normally Cullen would’ve probably teased her, but this time his large hands immediately covered her soft skin, fingers pinching and pulling, as Evelyn gasped happily.

Once his infernal breeches were down to his knees, Alistair guided his cock to her glistening entrance. He was about to sink into her, when she shook her head, causing him to stop and stare at her confusedly.

“Not yet,” she said. “I want to have the time to fully enjoy it. I want you inside me tonight. Both of you together. But for now I want your cock rubbing against my cunt.”

“Whatever my queen wants,” Alistair responded, pressing the length of his cock against her wet folds.

That first contact was glorious, the feeling of her hot and slick flesh against him almost overwhelming. He moved his hips, and Evelyn responded in kind. He grabbed her hip for better leverage, his fingers digging into the soft flesh, coaxing a moan out of her. In a moment they had a rhythm established, shallow thrusts keeping them as close together as possible.

At his side, Alistair heard the soft metallic sounds of a belt being pulled out of the buckle. He turned to look as Cullen undid his breeches, pulling out his cock and giving it a long stroke, sighing at the sensation.

“I sure could use hands right about now,” Evelyn muttered, apparently watching Cullen as intently as Alistair did.

“I have one hand to spare,” Alistair responded, reaching out to wrap his fingers around Cullen’s thick erection.
Maker, but he missed this. In those first moments back together he always had a moment when he wondered how he managed to survive without it, without them. To have them near, to touch them again, to bring them pleasure was the greatest possible feeling. It was something of a miracle, the way they fit together, the way they moved in perfect synchronicity.

It was a bit difficult to know what to focus on, which sensation, which sight. There was his wife-to-be writhing on the table under him, her breasts swaying with their movements, her knuckles white as she held her dress, her cunt so impossibly soft against his cock. And then there was his future husband, fucking Alistair’s fist, one hand on Evelyn’s hip, holding her down, the other reaching out to grab her breast.

“This…” He grinned, realization striking him. “This is how it’s going to be,” he managed to say between heavy breaths. “Always.” He wouldn’t have to miss them ever again. They were just beginning something permanent.

“Al-always,” Cullen agreed on a loud groan, as Alistair was twisting his wrist and smearing precome over his cock, determined to push him over he edge.

Evelyn apparently could only make affirmative noises, her voice raising bit by bit as his cockhead brushed against her nub perfectly.

It felt like they’d barely begun, and yet Alistair was sure he wasn’t going to last very much longer. He was experiencing the purest joy - the highest sexual pleasure combined with the most tender emotional feelings.

“Always,” he heard himself repeat reverently.

Evelyn nodded her head. Her lips were parted, shaky moans escaping, as she ground her hips against him and pushed her breast into Cullen’s palm.

Alistair then looked to Cullen, who smiled at him before moving to kiss him deeply.

After a moment there was a small disgruntled sound coming from the desk, and so they broke apart.

“If I had… Ah… If I had the use of my hands I’d drag you down to kiss me,” Evelyn told them.

Alistair and Cullen exchanged a glance, before falling upon her, kissing her lips, cheeks, jaw and down her neck, their bodies flush on her. There was no trace of discontent in her voice now as she was gasping between kisses.

The desk, on the other hand, was making some rather worrying sounds. It was certainly not designed for three people to put their full weight on it, and the fact that those people were moving vigorously was not helping matters.

“This desk is close to breaking,” Cullen muttered against Evelyn’s collarbone. Despite his words, he did nothing to stop. He was still thrusting into Alistair’s fist. For his part Alistair couldn’t move his hand much, as it was now trapped between Cullen’s body and Evelyn’s thigh, but he tried to tighten his fingers in just the right way.

“I’m close too,” Evelyn said. “I just hope I break before the desk does.”

“Is that a challenge?” Cullen demanded, his tongue starting to trace the path of a pale blue vein that lead from her throat over her breast.

“With me? Always,” she retorted.
“Always?” Alistair asked, that word again making his heart leap.

“Aaa…” she moaned as the tip of Cullen’s tongue reached her nipple, swirling around it, “al….” Alistair shifted his hips a bit, pressing right into that perfect spot, making her gasp, “al….” Cullen was sucking her nipple now while Alistair gripped her hip tighter, moving against her in short sharp thrusts, “always!” she shouted, trailing off into a series of panting breaths as she rode out her release.

Seeing her in her rapture was Alistair’s own undoing, pleasure sweeping over him. He buried his face against her neck, trying to muffle his voice.

A moment later he heard Cullen’s voice break, stifled against Evelyn’s breast, and felt his sticky seed on his hand.

They both slumped forward, the pleasure having drained them of energy. At the sudden movement the desk groaned, forcing them to jump up nervously.

“Flimsy Orlesian desks,” Alistair scoffed.

“Do you think sturdy Fereldan desks can take three people fucking on them without protest?” Evelyn asked, amused.

“I’d wager they can. Anyone willing to test that theory with me?”

“Absolutely.” Cullen grinned at him.

“Would you two desk deviants mind giving me a hand here? I can’t very well let this dress go and stain it.” Evelyn looked at them expectantly, her chin pointing down, to the stains marking her thigh and the curls between her legs.

“I resent that ‘title’,” Cullen told her, taking out a handkerchief from his pocket and moving to clean her.

“I don’t. It has a nice ring to it. Must be the alliteration,” Alistair observed, working on making himself presentable.

“I still think that’s no way for a queen to speak to her husbands,” Cullen said, his voice teasing. Still, just hearing that word made Alistair happy.

“You’ll forgive me somehow,” Evelyn responded. “Anyway, life would be so boring without a bit of deviancy. I’m proud of mine. You can call me the queen of kink.”

When Cullen was done, Evelyn let go of the voluminous skirts, allowing them to fall over her legs. She flexed her fingers a few times.

“I thought you were going to be the queen of Ferelden, but that works too,” Alistair said, as he and Cullen extended their hands to her, helping her down.

“I fear Bull would fight you for that title,” Cullen suggested, now fastening his breeches.

“You both know who’d win,” Evelyn told them smugly, pushing her breasts back into the confines of the bodice.

“You’d win,” Cullen and Alistair agreed.

Evelyn flashed them a grin before moving in front of a mirror, smoothing down her hair.
“Maker, we must all get that paint off,” she observed.

Alistair found a pitcher of water, settled it under the mirror and pulled out his handkerchief. They passed it around, scrubbing at each other’s faces until all traces of the paint were gone.

“We look amazing, if I do say so myself,” Alistair said, regarding the mirror. The reflections of his lovers smiled at him in agreement. They were three very attractive people, that was plain to see, but it was not just that - they also looked happy, radiant with that happiness.

“Pretty as a picture,” Evelyn said. Her eyes widened, as if she just thought of something brilliant. “We should commission a painting! That’s my first wish as far as decorating our palace goes. A huge painting of the king, the queen and the commander which will intimidate any visitors with their beauty, long after we’re wrinkled and grey.”

“Done!” Alistair agreed enthusiastically. Tegan was telling him he needed to have a portrait made for the longest time.

“Better hope we don’t end up with another Velvet Cailan,” Cullen muttered.

Evelyn rolled her eyes.

“Of course we won’t. It’ll be perfect. But we can discuss the details of palace decor later. For now we must get back to the negotiations - Orlesians are rather liberal with the duration of lunch, but I fear we’re testing their patience.”

Cullen nodded and they turned to the doors.

“Wait.” They halted at Alistair’s words. “We have to discuss one thing - when are we going to announce our engagement? I’d like nothing better than to do it right away, but I fear it may not be the wisest idea.”

“This evening, at the formal dinner,” Evelyn responded without hesitation.

“Really? You don’t think we should wait until this whole thing is over?” Alistair asked, hoping she wasn’t going to change her mind, yet needing this to be a calculated decision.

“If we do it later, it will look like we are hiding our plans in order for Evelyn to look impartial, but secretly make a better deal for Ferelden,” Cullen explained. “That way everything is out in the open from the start.”

“That’s very logical. No one can say I’m taking you two to Denerim just for your superior good looks.” Alistair grinned. He was truly relieved he wasn’t going to be forced to wait. “Tonight,” he said, grabbing his lovers’ hands.

“Tonight,” they both responded, squeezing his hands.

With that they let go of each other and made for the doors, stepping out into the corridor. The spy who lead them there was standing against the opposite wall, a barely perceptible smile on her face. She knew. She was one of Leliana’s people - of course she knew. Alistair found he didn’t mind. Better she than some Orlesian spy.

They walked after the spy for a while when Evelyn stopped by a staircase.

“Go on without me. I must get to my chamber and repaint my lips,” she told them. “It would look rather suspicious if I went in with unpainted lips after spending the lunch time with the two of you.”
“Leave us if you must.” Alistair sighed dramatically, prompting his lovers to laugh. “Shall we go, commander?”

“Yes, my liege.”

They walked on towards the grand chamber, while Evelyn made a detour to her rooms. Alistair was sure the text hours of negotiations would drag interminably. And then there was going to be the formal dinner to go through.

Despite that, he knew that no amount of tedious quarrels and courtly intrigues was going to ruin this for him. He just got engaged, and he was disgustingly happy. And when things got too boring he could think about the night ahead of him...

Chapter End Notes

First, a small explanation. I’ve been made aware of the fact that not everyone fixates on small weird details like I do, so you may be confused as to what the Velvet Cailans is. In DA2, in the Black Emporium, you find a painting. The codex explains that after becoming the king, Cailan commissioned portraits of himself on velvet, which were to be sold. Art critics think that Velvet Cailans are ugly as fuck, and one in Orlais pays people for every one they bring her, since she wants to rid Thedas of all of them. I know a joke which has to be explained is a poor one, but I hope you’ll forgive me this self indulgence.

This entire story started with me telling canon to go take a hike, but this is the point where I diverge from it in the biggest way. This is the "nothing hurts and everyone's getting laid" version of the Exalted Council. I'm ignoring all the sad stuff, and I feel like explaining it. For one, with Evelyn having two lovers, one hand would be super inconvenient. But that's the most shallow explanation. The Inquisitor losing her hand is such a difficult and delicate subject, that I would either do it a disservice by exploring it in this story as is, or the story would have to undergo a major tonal shift. Neither option is satisfactory to me. Also, writing sad things isn't super great for my depressive ass, and I've already tackled the issue, so I won't be doing it again. If you're interested in my take on the Inquisitor recovering after the events of Trespasser you can check out Broken - my 10K angst fest with a happy ending.

I'll shut up now, but before I do that, as always, comments and kudos would be much appreciated.
The sound of her heels hitting the marble floor reverberated through the large corridor as Evelyn hurried to her chamber. She felt light, like she could move without touching the ground. She used to hate the Winter Palace, but now she knew her opinion on the place would change, since it was the site of some of the best and most important changes in her life.

They just got engaged! How amazing was that? She and Cullen worried they’d have to bring up the subject themselves, but Alistair surprised them, actually doing it himself. And on the second day of the Exalted Council no less. She was proud of him, proud of all of them - that they were in a place where the love and trust between them have reached a level which allowed them to make such a momentous decision.

Wide grin on her face, she threw the doors to her chambers open and marched through the sitting area into her bedroom. She almost shrieked when she noticed that the room wasn’t empty, like it should’ve been, but her alarm died down quickly as she saw who the intruder was. Pointed ears, blond hair, a facial tattoo and a self satisfied grin - this could be only one person.

“Master Arainai, I presume,” Evelyn greeted him calmly.

What could he be doing here? she wondered.

“Lady Trevelyan.” The assassin bowed deeply.

“I expect you’re not here to kill me,” she said, sauntering to her vanity. She knew she was safe in his presence - if Alistair trusted him, she would too.

“Kill you, dear lady? Never! I couldn’t take such a beauty from this world.”

Evelyn laughed at his words.

“You are exactly like Alistair described you, master Arainai.”

“Shame. I hate to be predictable. But let us dispense with formalities - my friends call me Zevran.”

“Are we friends then?” Evelyn asked, dipping a lip brush into her paint and looking at him in the vanity mirror.

“I do hope to gain your friendship, and if everything I’ve heard about you is true, I think we’ll get along famously.”

“That depends on what you’ve heard, but if it came from Isabela or Alistair, then it is true.” Evelyn applied the paint to her top lip carefully. “I was hoping to meet you at some point, but I confess I would never guess it would happen like this. I know you enjoy waiting for women in their bedchambers, but you must know you won’t succeed with me - I have all the men I can handle.”

“I think you’re underestimating yourself, Evelyn. May I call you Evelyn?”

Evelyn inclined her head in acquiescence. If any other man made such overt suggestions to her, he’d hear some choice words, but she knew it was just the way the assassin interacted with everyone.
“Well, then, Evelyn,” Zevran continued, “you must know I’d never go behind a friend’s back, unless he or she asked.” Evelyn couldn’t help laughing, prompting him to grin. “That is to say, I wouldn’t betray Alistair. And I fully know that, despite my many charms, I couldn’t tempt you - I know a woman utterly in love when I see one.”

“If you didn’t come to seduce or murder me, then what, pray tell, brings you to my chamber?”

“Curiosity, dear Evelyn. I noticed the three of you were very happy, and I wanted to know if there was a special reason behind it. My appearance during the negotiations would surely cause quite the stir, so instead I decided to visit you, introduce myself, and find out.”

“You have your suspicion as to what could’ve happened, then?” Evelyn questioned. Could he possibly have heard about the engagement? Should she tell him?

“I do have a very strong suspicion, but in case I’m wrong, I won’t say more.”

Evelyn tapped the tip of the brush against her lower lip, thinking.

“Does the thing you think happened start with the letter ‘e’?” she asked at last, turning to face him.

“It does!” The assassin grinned broadly. “Congratulations are in order then.”

“That they are. But how did you know?”

“Me? I just helped Alistair make up his mind on proposing,” Zevran told her, feigning nonchalance.

“You did?” Evelyn felt her eyebrows raise.

“We had a little chat that morning. I advised he should trust in you, let you decide and take on the consequences.”

“I’m very grateful to you then,” Evelyn said, truly impressed and moved. That didn’t sound like the man she’s heard so much about. She was very glad he apparently had hidden depths. “It must have been difficult for Alistair. I’m glad someone helped him. You truly have just earned my friendship.”

“It was my pleasure. And speaking of pleasure…”

“Uh-oh.” Evelyn knew where this was going, and found herself amused by Zevran’s blatant sexual advances. Coming from most other men his words would sound crass, bordering on repulsive, but he had a way of making them light and complimentary. There was no demand, no expectation - only a friendly offer, which could be accepted or rejected, without any negative consequences.

“I’ve already extended that invitation to your fiance, but he was rather unreceptive, so I’ll tell you as well - I and Isabela would be delighted to entertain all three of you.”

“Isabela as well? Well, that is certainly tempting, but I also must refuse.”

Zevran pouted for a moment, before smiling again.

“If I can’t interest you in those services, then perchance you will think of me if you need someone assassinated.”

“Oh, certainly! Come to think of it, Leliana will be staying on to help Cassandra, and so having another brilliant assassin available would be a great help to us.”

Evelyn truly hoped she wouldn’t need such services, and yet from experience she knew she couldn’t
discount that possibility. She was to rule an entire people, and she was determined to do her best to secure their prosperity, even if it meant ordering someone killed. It was true that the marriage was first and foremost a way for the three of them to be together, but Evelyn knew she was taking on a new duty - she was going to accept all the benefits of her new station and take on all the challenges, giving her all. True, she was not Fereldan, but she had grown to love the country and she was going to do right by its people.

“Consider me your humble servant, then, my queen,” Zevran said, pulling her out of her thoughts.

“There is, nor should there be, anything humble about you, my friend,” Evelyn responded with a smirk.

“I can’t argue with a queen who’s rumored to be as quick with her wit as she is with her bow.”

“Perhaps one day you will visit us and see just how quick I am with my bow.”

“A post wedding hunt then? I assume I’m invited.”

“And rightly so. You are Alistair’s friend, and mine as well now.”

“Wonderful! Now that the last point is cleared, I shall leave you. It was an absolute delight, queen Evelyn. We shall see each other soon enough.”

The assassin walked up to her, kissed her hand quickly, and then he was gone, disappearing through an open window.

That was certainly interesting, Evelyn decided. She quite liked the man, and even if she didn’t, his help in the matter of their engagement was not something she was going to forget.

She checked her appearance in the mirror again, fixing a stray lock of hair, and got up to leave. She needed to hurry. Everyone was probably waiting on her, getting irritated. A part of her enjoyed the idea of testing Orlesians’ patience, but at the same time she knew she had to remain professional. Her last days as the Inquisitor shouldn’t be conducted poorly.

Last days. The words echoed in her head as she descended the stairs. She’s been the Inquisitor for years now. It has become an integral part of who she was. She never asked for all that power, and yet she did a rather good job after having been granted it. Through all that time she actually grew to love the organization she’s built.

Diplomatic banquets and negotiations with merchants didn’t thrill her, but other aspects of the work were certainly interesting. Traveling and fighting alongside her companions was a pleasure, when it wasn’t tiring, painful or frightening. But most of all she enjoyed helping people, knowing she was making a change for the better. Whether it was returning a lost family heirloom, bringing supplies to refugees or freeing miners from the clutches of red templars, she knew she did something good.

There was a sense of purpose in leading the Inquisition. It was something larger than herself and she was immeasurably proud of it. Would she miss it?, she sometimes wondered. Yes and no. She would certainly long for adventures, but she wasn’t going to long for the days when she woke up and fell asleep feeling the weight of the entire world resting on her shoulders. She was glad they weren’t one step from the end of everything as they knew it.

It was true that being a queen would not free her from having to deal with nobles, a task she always loathed, but in this configuration she was going to have a different kind of power. She wouldn’t be angling for help and funds - she’d be able to put aristocrats in their place when they deserved it. But most importantly, she’d still be able to help ordinary people, without the fate of Thedas burdening
Would she have been happier having retired, able to go adventuring or settle down? Was freedom more important than a sense of purpose? She did not know. Whatever the answer was, it didn’t matter. After falling in love with Alistair she knew retiring to a quiet life was not an option. She’d take all queenly responsibilities and discomforts as a tradeoff for being with the two men she loved.

If someone offered her a choice of a life for the three of them as rulers of Ferelden or as a trio of free spirited adventurers, she’d certainly have to think about it. As it stood, with the choice between being with Alistair and not being with him, she didn’t hesitate. She was making the right decision, she had no doubt about that. There were going to be plenty of changes and challenges in her future, but she was going to overcome them, like she always did.

At last she’s reached the large doors to the chamber where the negotiations were taking place. The guards bowed to her and opened the doors. Inside courtiers and diplomats were milling about, talking in small groups, perfectly at ease, as if the delay was only a planned break.

Her entrance caused everyone gathered to return to their respective places. Cassandra welcomed them again and the talks begun in earnest. Normally Evelyn would’ve forced herself to pay attention, but the matters were rather trivial, in her opinion. During upcoming days negotiations were surely going to be taking place in smaller groups so that specialists in all pertinent fields could exchange professional opinions in a comfortable setting - she wasn’t needed to micromanage every detail.

“We’re engaged! Alistair proposed!” she wrote on a piece of paper, and pushed it over to Josephine. It was a bit juvenile, like passing notes during class, but Evelyn couldn’t help herself. She needed to share her joy.

Josephine looked up at her with a huge smile on her face, then pushed the paper over to Leliana, who started scribbling furiously. Evelyn looked at her in confusion.

“We knew this was going to happen, but I’m glad Alistair got the nerve to do it himself,” Leliana wrote. “Now that it’s official, let’s get to the most important part - your dress! I’ve been exchanging letters with some of the most renowned tailors in Orlais and Antiva, and I’ve narrowed the choice down to three candidates. They have some good ideas, but I think they can still be improved upon. They’re not thinking big enough. I’ll have some sketches to show you.”

Evelyn looked at Leliana with slight concern. She knew the other woman was going to be very enthusiastic about wedding preparations, and particularly the gown, but that she did not expect. She was glad to have the help, but feared Leliana was going to talk her into putting on something that required a square mile of fabric and an entire crystal mine. She showed the paper to Cullen, who only rolled his eyes, but stopped when Leliana shot him a sharp glare.

The following hours dragged by. Evelyn’s only entertainment, and at the same time a source of worry, were Leliana’s notes in which she bombarded her with suggestions. It was rather impressive how the woman could write of wedding decor while at the same time coordinating her people and interjecting into the discussion.

The sun was setting when Cassandra announced that the first day of negotiations was closed. Evelyn sighed a relieved breath. She’d have an hour to change her dress and hairdo for the formal dinner. After the sluggish afternoon, she suddenly felt invigorated, excited for what was to come.

She wasn’t sure if she was more eager for their announcement or for what would follow. No. Actually she did know - being with both of her intended was definitely the more appealing process. It’s been too long. Their little tryst on the desk only made her hungry for more.
Preparations for the dinner served to make the time go a bit faster, as she changed everything from her underwear to her hair. Putting on any good undergarments was probably a waste, since they were bound to be ruined, but she couldn’t very well have some shabby corset and old smalls under her expensive royal-red gown. If she were completely honest, she’d have to admit that she was playing up her annoyance with the destruction of her underwear. She did regret the loss of pretty things, but they were just that - things, and what she got in return was so much more valuable.

Once she descended to the large dining hall, it was already partially filled with people. Just like this morning, when she entered all eyes were on her, so she stood even straighter and smiled even brighter.

A servant lead her to her seat - on Alistair's right. The king was already there, happily chatting with Cullen, who was seated on his left. This was no doubt Josephine’s or Leliana’s doing, and she was very grateful for it.

Both of her men appeared very appreciative as they took in her dress, which featured another almost scandalously low neckline.

“If it wasn’t very impolite, I’d whistle,” Alistair said.

Cullen nodded his agreement.

“This old thing? It’s nothing.” Evelyn smirked, taking her seat. “Are you ready?”

“I’m very ready to start eating. Not that I regret the way we spent the lunch break, but I’ve been subsisting on tiny cakes since then, and they are not exactly filling,” Alistair responded.

“I think Evelyn wanted to know if we were ready for something other than food,” Cullen told him, smiling fondly at their perpetually hungry fiance.

“Oh! That! Yes. I’m very ready. For the announcement. And the other thing. Later,” Alistair finished in a low voice.

A shiver ran through Evelyn at his tone, but before she could say something flirtatious in return, Cassandra appeared, looking much more comfortable without her formal hat, and welcomed everyone.

There was no chance of Alistair making their announcement before the meal started. The second Cassandra was done, he was tearing into the entree. The food was superb, and with Alistair’s warden hunger, she couldn’t begrudge him. She focused on enjoying the meal, occasionally conversing politely with nearby dignitaries. It was a shame her companions were seated so far away from her, but she couldn’t have everything. There was going to be time to talk after dinner, although then they were probably all going to be congratulating her on her engagement.

It was after the second dessert course was cleared, that she noticed Alistair shifting in his chair, probably readying himself for a speech. He glanced to Cullen and then Evelyn, who gave him an encouraging smile. His courage apparently bolstered, Alistair stood up.

“Your Holiness, ladies and gentlemen, if I could have your attention,” he started. The gathered crowd fell silent, all eyes trained on him. “As we all know, the Inquisition is soon going to be disbanded, which means that the two brilliant people sitting at my sides are going to be left without an occupation. I saw that as a perfect opportunity for me, as well as Ferelden, and decided to offer them positions at my court. I’ve asked lady Trevelyan to be my wife, and ser Rutherford to be my commander.” Everyone gathered around the table started whispering urgently. Evelyn felt people
glancing at her and smiled proudly. “They have both graciously accepted,” Alistair continued, when
the whispers died down. “So join me, if you will, in raising a toast to my dear friends, who’ve
become so much more - lady Evelyn Trevelyan, future queen of Ferelden, and ser Cullen
Rutherford, Ferelden’s commander to be.”

Everyone lifted their glasses and saluted them. Evelyn sipped her wine, smiling brightly over the rim
of her glass. A weight has been lifted from her shoulders. Their relationship was public, or as much
of it as was possible, and it was a relief. They’d still have to be careful, but not as much as before.
They wouldn’t have to worry about every smile, fear every touch, plot and scheme for weeks just to
have a bit of time together.

No-one was likely to question the fact that all three of them were so close. Everyone would think that
Alistair and she fell in love when he came to Skyhold, and that he and Cullen became fast friends in
the same time. Since she and Cullen have already been friends for years it would only make sense for
the three of them to join forces to serve Ferelden.

After the toasts were done, the evening moved to another large chamber where everyone could
mingle. Just as Evelyn expected, the following hours were filled with congratulations and curious
inquiries. Some innocuous - was the date picked?, who was going to make her dress?, while others
were of a more serious nature - what did it mean for the negotiations?, shouldn’t she recuse herself
from them?

Recusing herself sounded like a dream come true to Evelyn, but she calmly explained that the matter
was going to be discussed with the Divine.

The best moments of the evening happened when her friends came over to speak to her.

The first of her former companions who managed to get to her was Vivienne. The woman looked
like an empress herself in a simply cut but richly embroidered midnight blue gown and an intricately
made openwork headdress. The crowd parted before her as she strode through.

“Darling! I adore that color on you. You look resplendent,” the First Enchanter said by way of
greeting.

“As do you. Which is why such a compliment means so much coming from you.”

“Well, tonight all eyes are on you. As they will remain. A queen is always scrutinised. But you know
that.”

“I… I do.” Evelyn had the unpleasant feeling there was a lecture or admonishment coming. She
respected the other woman immensely, and admired her intellect as well as her diplomatic skills, but
at times she felt like a child at school, being dressed down by a strict teacher who meant well, but
came off as overbearing.

“You are an exceptional young woman and I always knew you were going to do great things, and
this is in line with my expectations, and yet I know this is not through political maneuvering that
you’re becoming a queen.”

Evelyn tried not to sigh. There it was - a compliment swiftly accompanied by a slight criticism.

“You disapprove.”

“I don’t disapprove of love. I am glad you and King Alistair have that - it will make ruling together
easier. What I’m worried about is your other entanglement.”
Now Evelyn couldn’t stop herself from making a little frustrated sigh.

“It’s not an *entanglement*. There is no us without…”

Vivienne shook her head, and that small gesture was full of meaning.

“It’s nothing but trouble. I do care for our former Commander. He’s a good man and deserves happiness after all his trials, but this is not the way to that. I was glad to see him not responding to your advances - he was not the right man for you, and so I was delighted to hear that you and Alistair were getting close. But then I and Leliana happened to meet, and I found out the truth of the matter. It made me very worried for you.”

“We’re careful. We hardly want this to get out,” Evelyn responded defensively. She was indignant at the thought that Vivienne saw Cullen as being beneath her, but before she could express as much, the First Enchanter was speaking again.

“Leliana said she is looking out for you, that she has her people making sure you are not discovered, but I don’t think that’s enough. No matter how good they are at hiding secrets, it’s always safer for there to not be any secrets to hide. This would hurt all three of you, but…”

“No.” Evelyn cut her off sharply, not caring that she was being rude. “You know I value your council, and yet in this I will not follow your advice. Your opinion is noted, but what you ask is impossible. It would be as if I were losing a part of myself. It can’t happen. It won’t.”

Evelyn jutted her chin out, determination radiating off her. Vivienne looked like she was studying her very carefully, then closed her eyes for a moment, as if asking the Maker for strength and patience, then opened them and nodded once.

“I can see when I won’t succeed in something. I’ve spoken my mind and there’s nothing more for me to do. Despite your obstinacy in this matter, I still have faith in you. You will be a good queen to your new people.”

“This I can swear to you.”

“You hardly need to swear to me. But I’m pleased to know you’re taking this with the appropriate seriousness.”

“I am. I…” Evelyn hesitated. “I hope we won’t be parting on bad terms. I’d like to see you at my wedding.”

“You know I did not approve of every decision you made, but I was still by your side. I respect you, and that, and not a complete unanimity of opinions, is a good basis for a friendship.”

Evelyn breathed a sigh of relief. It was odd - even if she disagreed with the mage, if she angered her at times, she still wished to retain her good opinion.

“So you will come to Denerim?”

“Certainly, my dear. Worry not. Now go. Mingle. I’m sure we’ll talk again.” Vivienne smiled lightly at her, and left her, in moments engaged in conversation with three nobles.

Evelyn was also momentarily dragged into a discussion as well, which left her no time to think of her interaction with the First Enchanter. Still, when Cassandra made her way to her, Evelyn felt herself getting worried. Was another woman whose judgment she valued going to tell her she was making a mistake?
“Maker’s breath, those people are relentless! Justinia made it look effortless, but I am not her. I can’t handle all this… diplomacy. My hand itches for a sword.” Cassandra made a noise of frustration.

“I think you’re not giving yourself enough credit. You’re doing just fine,” Evelyn assured her.

“You’re too kind. But we shouldn’t be talking of me. You just got engaged - congratulations!” Cassandra gave her an honest and joyful smile.

“Thank you,” Evelyn responded tentatively.

“I know you’ve been talking to Vivienne,” Cassandra said, probably noticing Evelyn’s worry, “and I know what she must’ve said to you. She came to me to discuss the matter, but she found no ally in me.”

Evelyn felt her eyes go wide, prompting Cassandra to laugh.

“I know I’m the holiest of holies now, but I’m still me. I believe in love. This may not be conventional love, and I admit that at first I was rather shocked and didn’t understand it, but I came around. When Varric first told me about you…”

“Wait a second. Varric? Varric told you?”

“He’s a nuisance at times, but he’s not all bad. He always has the best gossip and so despite my better judgment I still keep in touch with him. He told me all about you and your relationship when I came to the Kirkwall Chantry inauguration.”

“Should I be jealous? Are you better friends with him than with me?” In truth Evelyn was pleased to hear that those two were getting along at last.

“Never! I know that between both our duties we may have not wrote to each other as often as we should, but you’ll always be my dear friend. I look forward to spending a bit of time with you in Denerim. And officiating your wedding, of course.”

“You’ll do it?” The idea was too perfect. Evelyn wasn’t sure if Cassandra would be able to take the time to do it, so she tried not to get her hopes up before, but now she was grinning at her friend’s words.

“I wouldn’t allow anyone else to do it. I know I won’t be able to marry all three of you, but you have my blessing. I think the Maker understands.”

Evelyn didn’t care about the Maker’s opinion, since she doubted he even existed, but she was glad her friend was so accepting.

Out of the corner of her eye she saw one of Cassandra’s attendants gearing up to interrupt. She had to make those last moments count.

“I didn’t think this wedding could get any better, but with you performing it, it definitely did,” she said, grabbing her friend’s hands and squeezing affectionately.

“It’s the least I could do.” Cassandra smiled at her. “I’m afraid duty calls,” she added, looking to her attendant. “We’ll speak later. If I don’t get deposed for murdering a noble first.”

“I’m sure you won’t.”

Cassandra shot her a skeptical look before allowing herself to be lead away.
Evelyn was about to take a small break and find more wine, when Sera all but jumped in front of her. Evelyn wasn’t sure what to expect from her, but she was fairly sure the word ‘congratulations’ wasn’t going to be a part of the conversation.

“Can’t figure you out,” Sera started without preamble. “You’re a noble, but you don’t like them. You like to be free and do as you please, but you agree to be the stupid queen.”

“I did agree to be a queen, but not a stupid one. I think I can do a lot of good as…”

“More like they can do you good!” Sera cackled.

Evelyn looked around worriedly, but people seemed unaware of her comments. No one was going near them, keeping away from Sera as if she had the plague.

“So you disapprove of me being queen, but not of me being with two men? That’s the exact opposite of Vivienne’s position.” It made sense, now that she’s said it out loud. No two people could be more different than Sera and Vivienne.

“Course she’d think that. I don’t care who diddles who. There are more important things.”

“It’s not about… diddling.” Evelyn whispered the last word, cringing at it. “Or not entirely. It’s about love. I love them. Being a queen wasn’t my goal - it was the collateral.”

“That’s a big collateral,” Sara observed. “But it’s your decision. You know I don’t like the idea of queens, but as far as those go, you may actually be decent. You never wanted to be one, you never asked for all that power, so maybe you won’t use it wrong,” Sera said, looking rather serious.

“Believe me Sera, I intend to help people,” Evelyn told her earnestly. “And if I ever stop doing that, you have my permission to take me down a peg, to remind me what I should be doing.”

“Won’t be as much fun with your permission, but you can trust I’ll be there to set you right if you go wrong.” Sera grinned dangerously. “So I’m invited to the wedding, yeah?”

“Of course!”

“Just don’t expect me to wear some dress and carry your veil or whatever.”

“I’d never subject you to such horrors,” Evelyn promised, amused by the idea of Sera in a pink gown, walking behind her, holding her train.

“I’ll be there then. And now I’ll go have fun with your Cully-Wully. I always said he had a stick up his arse, but I think that wasn’t the problem. The problem was there wasn’t anything going up his arse.” Sera laughed at her own joke. “I’ll tell him that and then watch him splutter.”

Not waiting for a response, Sera was off, leaving Evelyn shaking her head and smiling to herself - there was some truth to Sera’s words.

“Amusing little creature, that one,” a courtier she thought she may recognize murmured, sliding up to her.

Evelyn almost told her not to let Sera hear such words, but she stopped herself. The courtier could tempt fate as much as she liked - it was none of Evelyn’s business.

After that conversation, Evelyn managed to finally get that glass of wine she wanted to. Dorian and Bull found her as she was leaving the table with refreshments.
“Well, Boss, I’ve been keeping my finger crossed, like you told me to do before your trip to Orlais - it must’ve worked. Congratulations!” Bull clasped her arm, grinning.

“And I told you it was all going to work itself out. Which it did,” Dorian told her smugly. “Now what do you say?”

“You were right, Dorian. You’re brilliant and handsome and all-knowing and…”

“You are mocking me, but it’s all true. Now come here - cause a little scandal by hugging the terrible Tevinter magister.”

Evelyn embraced Dorian eagerly. She’s missed him. Why did he have to be all noble, trying to fix his country, which was so far away from hers?

“I’ll see you for the wedding, won’t I?” she whispered against his shoulder.

“Wouldn’t miss it for the world,” Dorian responded, gently letting her go.

“And you too, Bull. You must come as well.”

“Me and the Chargers will be your honour guard,” the mercenary promised. “Now let’s let other guests have a moment of your time - tomorrow evening we’ll celebrate properly, like we did in Herald’s Rest.”

Evelyn liked that plan.

“Good idea, Amatus,” Dorian also agreed. “I think it’s time for us to torment Cullen a bit. I bet I can make him blush before you do.”

“What does the winner get?”

Dorian beckoned for Bull to lean in and whispered something in his ear.

“You’re on!”

Evelyn watched them go and even as a courtier started a conversation with her, she observed as the two men found Cullen and inevitably made him blush in mere moments. She felt a bit sorry for Cullen, having to deal first with Sera and now with Dorian and Bull. But at least they kept the nobles away from him and provided a distraction.

She lost sight of him for a while, as people shifted and moved, but some time later, she spied him from the corner of her eye again. He was surrounded by a throng of admirers now, since Dorian and Bull weren’t there to protect him.

As the Commander of the Inquisition’s forces he was a sought after match, and now it appeared as the leader of Ferelden’s army he was perhaps even more valuable - the Inquisition was temporary, while this position was much more permanent. Cullen looked as annoyed with all the attention as ever. She and Alistair would never have to deal with that, but he did. He couldn’t say he was taken, that he was engaged. He had to suffer through the unwanted advances.

It saddened her, when she thought of it, how Cullen was the one who had to sacrifice the most out of the three of them. She and Alistair could hold hands in public, could share a bedchamber. Their love was going to be publicly recognized and sanctioned. It was deeply unfair. She again imagined a world in which they were just three ordinary people, able to live how they wished. But that was not their world. This one was, and they had to make the best of what they were given. They would have
to makes sure Cullen always felt loved, to each and every day show him how important he was to them, to keep him happy.

“Peace, excitement - contradictions, yet complimentary,” Cole’s familiar, rushing voice was at her ear suddenly. “A promise of a future he never imagined he could have. Do I deserve it? Yes, yes I do. Old wounds closed, covered by scars - not erased, still pulled taught at times, but no longer bleeding, never again bleeding. Pride. I’m loved, I’ve allowed myself to love.”

Evelyn felt her lips trembling with emotion.

“I’m proud of him too,” she whispered.

“I’ve felt his feelings for so long like a storm, like a battle, sharp, angry, reproachful, but they’ve been softening over time, getting gentler, lighter. He was healing himself. We were all healing him a bit, helping, supporting, forgiving. You helped the most, the two of you, but he was always strong - he would’ve been alright on his own, but now he’s more. He’s happy.”

“I…” Evelyn hesitated. “I shouldn’t be asking you this, but… Does he mind very much having to pretend to be less than he is to us, not being publicly acknowledged?”

“He always wanted to serve, not seek glory. He doesn’t like the nobles thanking him, fawning over him. He doesn’t like them disrespecting him, either, but he just mostly doesn’t like them. False, cold, calculating. He doesn’t respect them. They don’t need to know. They’d ruin what is good. He’s glad friends know, embarrassed, but glad. He has all he needs. He serves - his country and his love, without glory, but with pure joy.”

The breath left Evelyn’s lungs in a relieved rush.

“Thank you, Cole. This… I’m so glad to know it.”

“Happy to help.” Cole smiled. “It was odd sometimes, not knowing what you felt. Relaxing, a respite from the entire world’s feelings, but still odd. Now I think I know what you feel - I see your face, I see their faces, I know what they feel, how it matches, and you must match it as well. I like it - more love, like echoes, only multiplying, getting stronger instead of fainter with each repetition.”

“Everything alright?”

Evelyn turned her head to look at Varric, who came up to them.

“Yes, yes.” She smiled.

“You looked like you were about to cry. We’ve talked about this, kid - no deep traumatic revelations at parties.”

Evelyn laughed.

“If I were to cry, it would’ve been happy crying. Cole just told me something very sweet.”

“Oh. Good. But still - maybe let’s not make anyone cry at parties.”

“I’ll try.” Cole nodded solemnly. “I think I’ll go have more small cakes now.”

“You do that, kid.” Varric smiled. “Herald of Andraste, Inquisitor, Queen - are you going for some kind of title bingo?”

“Well, Master Tethras, Viscount of Kirkwall, we’re all gathering those pretty accidentally, I’m
afraid.”

“You may be right about that. I just wanted to help my city a bit and they made me the head of the whole thing. You just want to be with the ones you love and you have to be a queen to get that. We make carrying those burdens look easy. Oh, but I should stop this morose nonsense. Congratulations! You're newly engaged and should think only of happy things - dresses, veils and cakes.”

“Lelian is having the best of times with those.” Evelyn sighed.

“I’m sure she is. I also have plans of my own regarding your wedding. Alistair once complained he’d never find anyone he’d want to marry, and I told him then that I’ll be drinking an entire cask of wine at his wedding. I can’t wait to keep that promise. He couldn’t have found better people to share his life with and I’ll be glad to raise a toast or ten to you.”

“We’ll make sure to have your favorite vintage then,” Evelyn assured him. “I’m so glad you’ll all be there. I miss you.”

“I have a bit of experience with companions parting ways, but there’s always a reason to bring them back together. End of the world or a wedding, it doesn’t matter - the band will be back together.”

“Only weddings from now on, please.”

“Let’s hope.” Varric nodded. “I think a few dukes are planning on murdering me for taking up too much of your time.”

“Zevran is kind of working for me now, so if they try anything I’ll murder them right back.”

Varric laughed.

“Still, you’re probably right,” Evelyn told him regretfully. “But before you go, I must know - how’s your new book coming along?”

“The one with the templar, warden and a Marcher lady? I get a few pages done here and there - the first part will certainly be ready for your wedding. Alas I’ll have to publish it under an assumed name - can’t have my people thinking I’m writing smut instead of governing.”

“I’ll keep your secret.” Evelyn promised.

Varric saluted with two fingers before disappearing into the crowd.

“Félicitations, lady Trevelyan, or should I say, your majesté,” one of the dukes who were waiting in the wings told her in a heavily accented voice.

“For now it’s still lady Trevelyan,” Evelyn responded, smiling politely at the courtier.

The tower clock was striking eleven by the time she was done talking to Tom Rainier. There was a whole slew of courtiers who came before him, and she was dreadfully bored with all the congratulations, but she couldn’t leave without exchanging a few sentences with him. It was a rather short conversation - she was tired, and he slightly uncomfortable, it seemed. Thom was the only one of her companions who didn’t make any mention of Cullen and the true nature of their relationship. Perhaps he held more traditional views on courtly love. Evelyn didn’t particularly care what his reason was. He was still polite to her, and that was all that mattered.

When they were done, she started making her excuses to others who wished for a moment of her time, and headed to the doors.
Cullen was already gone, probably waiting for them in Alistair’s chamber. Evelyn cast a glance to her king, who was still in the clutches of the nobles. Seeing her leaving was surely going to give him the incentive to get rid of them - he wasn’t going to remain alone, knowing that his lovers were waiting for him.

Chapter End Notes

It's been a while, I know, but I've been having just the shittiest past couple of weeks. I'm trying to get back into the swing of things, and I hope you enjoyed this chapter. I tried to do all the lovely companions justice. I'm sorry if any of you really love Blackwall - I never connected with his character, so I had no idea how he'd act in this situation.

And now for a truly embarrassing confession - I made an Excel spreadsheet for this story. I have basically no excuses - I've accepted that this is my life now. Anyway, the spreadsheet made me realize that the blowjob to cunnilingus ration was seriously skewed, and I've decided to rectify that. So you can look forward to the Herald of Andraste, Inquisitor, future queen of Fereldend getting eaten out in the next chapter.

As always, I appreciate all your feedback. Comments and kudos basically make my day.
Evelyn’s feet were absolutely killing her in the beautiful high heeled shoes she wore. After exiting into the corridor and getting away from the guard’s line of sight, she took the shoes off, sighing as the cold marble soothed her feet. She was free at last.

When she reached the residential wing of the palace, devoid of servants, who were waiting for their masters in their chambers, she grabbed the skirt of her dress, lifting it, and broke into a run. The material fluttered as she quickly made her way up staircases and through corridors.

She was a bit breathless when she reached Alistair’s chamber. Her elaborate updo was crooked, some strands completely escaping, but she thought it hardly mattered. By the end of the night she was surely going to be a complete mess. She smiled at the thought, pushing the doors open.

Entering, she dropped the shoes to the floor and started pulling pins out of her hair.

“Evelyn?” Cullen called out to her from the bedchamber.

“It’s me. Alistair’s still downstairs, but I’m sure he’ll be here presently,” she responded, placing her pins on a table and shaking out her hair.

When she entered the bedchamber, she was greeted by the sight of Cullen stretched out on the bed in nothing but his breeches, a book lying open on his stomach.

“Brains and beauty - you’re the whole package,” she told him, grinning widely.

“I’m not sure about brains - this is Varric’s tale. I decided to catch up on the whole series.”

“Finally! It’s really delightful. Which part is it?”

Evelyn settled down next to Cullen, who lifted the book for her to inspect.

“Ohhh, that’s a really good one! And if I’m not mistaken, in just a few pages…” She started flipping through the book, but was distracted from her task as Cullen pulled down the sleeve of her dress, baring her shoulder, and starting to kiss it.

“You’re overdressed,” he murmured against her collarbone.

“Just when I thought we’d have an in depth discussion on literature, you go and pull a stunt like this,” Evelyn told him, trying to sound offended, and at the same time tilting her head to give him better access.

“Something definitely will be in depth, but I’m not sure it’ll be the conversation,” he responded.

Evelyn couldn’t stop herself from laughing. She pulled away, looking at him with amazement.

“Cullen Stanton Rutherford! I never expected such things from you!”

“Bad influence.” He shrugged.

“The worst,” Evelyn agreed. “It should be rewarded.”
She sat the book on the nightstand, and started pulling at the top layer of her dress.

“The prettier the dress, the worse it is to take off,” she complained, fidgeting with different ties and straps.

“Then your wedding gown is surely going to be a nightmare for the wedding night,” Cullen said, assisting her as best he could.

“Maker, I fear to think of that. Leliana is beyond excited about it.”

At last they managed to rid her of the outermost layer.

“There’s more underneath?” Cullen gaped at what they uncovered.

“Just this layer and then the petticoat, undershirt and corset, I promise.”

“That’s at least two layers to many for my taste,” Cullen complained, nonetheless valiantly fighting the fabric.

They were almost done with the second layer, when the doors fell open, and then there was the sound of a key being turned in the lock.

“Finally!” Alistair almost shouted. “Why is no-one greeting me?”

Cullen and Evelyn shared a glance, before jumping out of bed. The dress slipped down Evelyn’s hips, almost making her trip, but she managed to right herself and sprint to the main chamber.

Alistair was standing by the doors, taking off his jacket.

“I barely got away from them,” he complained. “Congratulations are nice, but after the fiftieth time, they lose some of their charm.”

“I’ve only received a fraction of what you did, but I’m confident in saying that your congratulations didn’t involve allusions to your sex life,” Cullen said, his mouth twisting with displeasure. “Most of our friends are very enthusiastic about making me blush in public.”

“If you think Bull and Dorian didn’t ask me if I went to my knees, then you’re very much mistaken,” Alistair told him. “They were very pleased to hear I did. I tried to explain that it was non-sexual, but they didn’t believe me. They’ve entrapped me with that question.”

Cullen laughed, probably forgetting his own embarrassing conversations.

“Let’s not talk of them anymore,” he suggested. “We have better things to do.”

“That we do,” Alistair agreed, reaching out his hands to them.

Evelyn and Cullen took his hands, but as he tried to pulled them close, they both resisted.

“No more doorways and desks - we’re doing this right,” Evelyn said.

“That means bed,” Cullen added.

“Whatever my spouses command,” Alistair responded, allowing them to lead him away from the entrance. “Spou-se-sss,” he repeated the word, stretching it out. “Sounds a bit odd. Plurals are weird.”
“Better get used to it - you’ll be calling us that for years to come,” Cullen said.

“I like the sound of that.” Taking advantage of their momentary distraction, Alistair yanked on their hands, and Evelyn and Cullen found themselves pressed to their future husband’s body. “I love you, my spouses.”

He beamed at them, his hands sneaking around their backs, holding them close. Almost simultaneously, Evelyn and Cullen both pressed a kiss to the corner of his mouth. His eyes fell shut for a moment as he smiled, and this time Evelyn used the opportunity to pull him in the direction of the bedroom. Cullen was soon helping her.

“You know I could stop you two, if I wanted to,” Alistair said, nonetheless allowing them to lead.

“No, you wouldn’t,” Cullen countered. “I think that’s something we must all remember - when the two of us decide on something, there’s nothing the third one can do to stop them. I was the first one to experience that.”

“So I’ll be helpless if the two of you gang up on me in the war room? I’ll be a puppet of a king?” Alistair asked, as they were crossing the threshold to the bedroom.

“You like it when we gang up on you,” Evelyn countered, smirking. “But just like that first time, the two of us may find ourselves allied against Cullen - in politics or bed.”

“Or the queen may find herself having to acquiesce to our wishes,” Cullen offered.

As if that were a cue, the two of them spun her around, and before she knew what was happening, Evelyn was on her back on the bed, bouncing slightly on the mattress. She was about to get up, but they were crawling on the bed after her, and soon they were hovering over her, matching grins on their faces.

“So what is your wish now, oh mighty husbands?” she asked, cocking an eyebrow at them.

“My wish,” Alistair started, his hand reaching back to start pulling at her petticoat, “is to get between my queens thighs, because I’ve missed the taste of her sweet quim.”

Evelyn sighed at his words, as he continued to lift up her petticoat with one hand and trace the length of her leg with the other.

“I’m fully prepared to acquiesce,” she murmured. Her words ended with a gasp when Alistair’s calloused fingers reached the edge of her stocking, brushing against bare skin.

“And what do you want?” she asked, looking at Cullen.

“I want to finish what we’ve started - to get you out of those unreasonable layers of fabric. Then I’ll be contented to simply watch.”

“Again, you won’t have any protest from me,” Evelyn said.

She was loathe to lose Alistair’s touch, but she knew they’d have to part to undress. Alistair and Cullen moved to sit and pulled her up by her hands. With perfect synchronicity, their skills apparently not diminished despite their separation, they worked on undressing her. Alistair crawled behind her to untie her petticoat, while Cullen remained in front of her, pulling her light undershirt off and throwing it to the floor. Once their tasks were done, Cullen started pulling the petticoat from under her and Alistair was loosening the strings of her corset.
A part of her wanted to be more active, but it was also pleasant to just let herself be taken care of, to have her lovers’ fingers drifting over her body, mindful of their task, and yet always making sure to brush against her sensitive skin, to linger, even if for a brief moment, on a place that was certain to make her shiver.

When at last the corset was off, she sighed, feeling the vice grip loosening over her ribs, her constricted breasts spilling free.

“Your poor skin,” Alistair whispered, tracing the patterns of red indentations the metal rings and hard boning of the corset left in the skin of her back. She looked down at herself to see that her chest and stomach were similarly marked. It was soon going to disappear, but at the moment it didn’t look well.

Cullen pressed his fingers into the lines on her stomach.

“Those are usually not that deep,” he observed.

“I suppose not. This was a new corset I had made for the dress. I wanted to look perfect for the announcement of our engagement, but I think the dressmaker and my maid were rather overzealous - I’d still look regal with my waist a few inches larger.”

There was a hum of agreement from behind her, followed by a kiss to her back.

“You look like a perfect queen now, with nothing crushing your ribs,” Cullen said, rubbing over the marks.

“I hardly think I could’ve walked into the dining hall in only my knickers and stockings,” Evelyn responded, trying to simultaneously lean into the lips moving against her back and the fingers running over her front.

“It’s Orlais - you could’ve ended up starting a new fashion trend,” Alistair joked.

Evelyn laughed, but that sound quickly turned into a gasp as Cullen’s fingers ghosted over her breasts. Before she could seek out more of that contact, he was moving his fingers down, to the sides of her knickers. She watched him as he carefully pulled the delicate material down her legs.

“Ruining two in one day would be excessive,” he said, answering her unspoken question.

She didn’t mind either way - the destruction of her underwear was always rather exciting, but this tender care, Cullen’s fingers firm on her legs, also had its appeal.

As soon as the knickers were removed, she felt Alistair’s fingers sneaking from behind, over her waist and down.

“Oh-hah.” She pressed her own hands over his. “You’re both also getting undressed.”

At her words Cullen quickly undid the laces of his breeches, pulled the garment off and sent it sailing over the room.

“Done!” he reported happily.

Now they both turned to Alistair, who was still almost completely dressed.

“You’ve had a head start,” he complained, pulling his tunic over his head, trying to rectify the situation.

“Alas there was none of that this night,” Evelyn said, watching as the familiar curves of his muscles
were revealed to them. “Unless you mean it in the sense of *early* start.”

“I did mean it in that sense, but now my mind wanders to what you could’ve been doing if I were delayed. You have the power to turn everything filthy,” Alistair said, with some dose of pride, his voice muffled by the tunic over his head.

“Once we’ll be all living together permanently, we’ll give you all the head start you’ll want,” Cullen told Alistair, helping him pull the tunic off.

“And I will most definitely take you both up on that offer,” Alistair responded with a grin, pulling Cullen in for a kiss. He visibly shuddered as Cullen reached to cup his half hard cock, before moving to his belt.

Evelyn sidled up to them, busying herself with the laces of Alistair’s breeches. She felt him shiver under her and Cullen’s touch. How he must’ve missed it. She leaned forward to kiss at his throat, not needing her sight to undo the laces. Soon they surrendered to her skill and she felt the soft skin covering unyielding hardness. She gave him one quick stroke, before forcing herself to stop and instead pull down the breaches.

With some assistance from Alistair, they’ve managed to rid him of the last of his garments, and they were all finally naked. It always felt so very right when they were left like this - with no barriers between them, completely open and vulnerable to each other.

“Do I get what I want now?” Alistair asked.

Evelyn smiled at him.

“You get to take it,” she said.

In a flash she was on her back again, her hands pinned above her head, and Alistair was pushing her legs open with his knees, settling between her thighs. Her breathing has gone shallow and she knew her chest was rising and falling rapidly with it, her breasts on perfect display in her current position.

Alistair was grinning above her. She was readying herself to say something, but then his fingers were right between her folds, and she could only groan.

“So wet,” he rasped, his fingers gliding over her. “I’ve missed feeling how slick you become for me.”

“And I’ve missed seeing your chin glisten when you come up from between my thighs,” Evelyn responded. His fingers were very clever indeed, but after his earlier declaration nothing else but his mouth on her cunt would do, so she needed to get him on the right track.

It was quite the surprise when instead of moving slowly and kissing his way down her body, like he so often did, Alistair quickly let go of her hands and dove down, his tongue replacing his fingers, tracing a path from her opening up to the top of her sex.

“Just as sweet I remembered,” he said, looking up at her after that first taste.

“You’re never that talkative when you’re actually enjoying eating something,” Evelyn managed to say, just as transfixed with the sight of her juices on his chin as she had told him.

“Can’t have you thinking that,” Alistair decided, before returning to his task.

Evelyn keened as his tongue pushed right inside her. He started fucking her with it slowly, dragging
the tip of his tongue over her inner walls. He was completely engrossed in his task - she watched him closely and listened to the little noises he was making. She loved the fact that he was enjoying himself.

Another deliberate thrust had her hips undulating. Alistair shot her a quick warning glance, before putting one broad palm over her stomach, his spread fingers spanning the entirety of it. He was pushing her into the mattress, adding more delightful pressure.

His mussed hair was calling to her - she wanted to take a hold of it, but she also didn’t want to distract him. Instead she squeezed her own breasts, taking her nipples between thumb and forefinger, pulling.

Cullen, who up until that point was sitting off to the side, now moved into her field of vision, kneeling behind Alistair. She felt as much as heard Alistair moaning when Cullen placed one hand on his side and moved closer to him.

“You said you’d be happy just to watch,” Evelyn told him.

“I’ve changed my mind,” Cullen responded, his hips thrusting, his other hand going under Alistair’s body, making Alistair push his tongue into her harder. “I’ve missed having our dear king under me. I’ve thought of fucking him...” Cullen grinned when Alistair groaned and shook again, “but I don’t have the patience for the preparation at the moment. Fortunately I can still rub my cock between his arsecheeks, and jerk him off, as I watch you play with your tits.”

Now Alistair looked up the length of her body to watch her as well. She pressed her breasts together, smirking at him. Alistair made another groan.

“I get to touch those almost daily, but every time I’m as eager as the first, so I can’t imagine how you’re tormenting Alistair now,” Cullen said.

“I think you’re making up for any torment I’m causing,” Evelyn retorted, watching Cullen’s arm moving, picturing his large fist pulling on Alistair’s erection.

Alistair made an affirmative hum.

“See? Everyone’s ha-happy.” Evelyn’s voice wavered as Alistair’s tongue swept across something very sensitive inside of her. “You’re so good that you’ll have him coming over those Orlesian sheets in moments.”

She watched Cullen’s movements increase, as if he wanted to prove her right or perhaps seal the fate of Orlesian bedding. She loved seeing him like this - lost in his pleasure but still unrelenting in delivering the same to others. Despite that, watching was proving difficult as pleasure mounted within her and her eyes were trying to slide closed. Each time she opened them she either saw Cullen moving behind Alistair, playing his body like an instrument, or Alistair who was doing the same to her.

She was close, but she needed that extra push, so she let go of one of her breasts, her hand moving lower...

“Keep doing what you were doing,” she heard Cullen say, and without question she followed the command, returning to fondling her breast. It never ceased to amaze her how in those situation he managed to find a voice which caused her to obey instantly. “Touch her pearl,” he commanded Alistair, and in a flash, Evelyn felt one large finger there.

A sob tore itself out of her mouth. Alistair was circling her nub with just the right pressure, his
tongue inside her moving at the same speed, and she was hurtling toward her completion.

“That’s right,” Cullen cajoled, “come for us. I’ll only let him come after you did, and he needs it, badly. He’s shaking under me, his cock leaking over my hand.”

Evelyn wished she could see that, but just that image in her mind, combined with Cullen’s deep voice, made her tip over the edge. Her chest bowed with the force of her orgasm, her hands reflexively squeezing her own breasts, adding to the sensation, which rolled through her like a wave. She was about to tell Alistair she couldn’t take any more, when she felt him pull away, the side of his face pressing into her inner thigh as he too reached his end with a prolonged groan.

She blinked her eyes open just in time to watch as Cullen came, his face contorted in pleasure. Once he was finished, he slipped to the side, lying on his back.

For long moments there was nothing but the sound of their uneven breathing, slowly returning to normal.

“Just think - in mere months we’ll be able to do that whenever we like. We won’t have to plan anything weeks in advance and write cryptic letters,” Alistair said, breaking the relative silence. “If I’ll feel so inclined, I’ll be able to walk up to you in our war room and ever so politely ask if you fancy a fuck in the middle of the day, and then we’ll be able to just go for it.”

“Maybe not in the war room?” Cullen laughed.

“And why not?” Evelyn asked. “I would definitely fancy a fuck in the war room.”

“I don’t think that…” Cullen stopped. “I think I need to remember my own advice - the two of you want it, so no matter how ill-advised I think it is, it will happen.”

“We will not force you into anything,” Alistair told him, now perfectly serious.

“It’s not that,” Cullen protested. “I think it’s a dangerous proposition, but also an exciting one. I know you’ll get me to a point when the former will be less important than the latter. You never make me do what I don’t want to do - you only help me allow myself to be more daring.”

“In that case, we’ll fuck all over our palace,” Alistair announced. The way he said “our palace” without hesitation, as if in his mind they were already sharing everything, was heartwarming.

“I already have a few ideas,” Evelyn chimed in. “But we’re not there yet, so I want to focus on the here and now. I know you two may need a moment before we can…”

She didn’t finish her thought, surprised when she noticed Cullen turning to his stomach and moving closer to her, nudging at Alistair.

“My turn,” he announced. “I won’t be waiting idly.”

Alistair for his part went without protest, lying himself along Evelyn’s body.

“You can rest,” Evelyn offered. She could wait a bit, even if the mere sight of Cullen lying himself between her thighs made her needy again.

“No no no. If I didn’t decide to join you, instead of watching, I’d be already fucking you. I changed the plan and now I’ll make up for that.”

“If you insist.” She smiled at him.
“If you don’t insist, then I will,” Alistair said. She felt his hand gliding over her ribs, where the red lines were slowly disappearing, heading towards her breasts. “I have a vested interest in my queen’s pleasure.”

“We do have to keep the queen happy. For the sake of Ferelden, really.”

Cullen was taking his time, his hands traveling over the inside of her thighs with firm pressure.

“Such patriots you two are,” Evelyn told them, wiggling slightly. She was impatient, eager for more pleasure, despite having already come. There was always something about their first night back together - no matter how many times they came together, it never felt like quite enough after months of separation.

At last, Cullen reached the apex of her things, two of his fingers slipping easily into her wet entrance. She sighed at the sensation, which prompted Alistair to palm her breast, rolling the nipple between his fingers.

“Serving queen and country never felt this good,” Cullen said, grinning up at her, slowly thrusting into her.

“More,” Evelyn pleaded, undulating her hips.

“The queen’s greedy.” Cullen chuckled, nonetheless adding a third finger, stretching her just like she needed him to.

“Yesss,” Evelyn gasped out. “I am greedy when it comes to you two.”

“I think we all are,” Alistair observed. “I for one can’t get enough of those magnificent tits.”

As if to prove his point, he gave one of her breasts another squeeze, while also bending down to take her nipple into his mouth. Evelyn moaned when she felt his lips closing around the tip and sucking. She couldn’t resist this time and threaded her fingers through his hair, cradling him to her breast.

“Perhaps the queen wants even more?” Cullen suggested, deliberately rubbing against that sensitive spot within her.

Evelyn was only able to nod. She was expecting to feel his lips and tongue between her legs, but instead felt him slipping his fingers out of her. She gasped in protest, before realizing his intention. One of his fingers was now circling her other entrance.

“Please,” she murmured, and felt one digit slipping easily into her arse. At the same time, three fingers of Cullen’s other hand pushed into her waiting cunt.

She again whined in protest when Alistair let go of her breast, instead looking curiously to what Cullen was doing.

“I’m preparing her for the night’s main event,” Cullen explained, looking at Alistair with a pleased expression. “I have my fingers in both her entrances, to get her ready for when she takes our cocks.”

Evelyn shuddered at his words.

“I can’t… can’t wait,” she breathed out, pushing herself on Cullen’s fingers, urging him to pick up speed. He obliged, at the same time adding another finger to her lower entrance.

She felt so very full, and yet she knew she was going to take more. The first time she was a tad bit
worried how that was going to work out, but now she knew just how much her body could handle, how much her body craved.

In this moment her body also craved immediate release. She was still sensitive from her previous orgasm, and knew it would not take much to send her over the edge again. Without much thought, she tightened her hold on Alistair’s hair and brought him back down to her nipple. He went quickly, humming happily as he sucked.

That was good. Better than good, but not enough. Her other hand was fist ed in the bedding, so she let go of it, first grabbing Alistair’s hand and squeezing it over her breast, and then tracing her fingers down her own body, towards Cullen. He watched her, never ceasing his movements and grinned when she carded her fingers through his hair.

“All more,” he said, allowing her to guide his head. He winked at her before turning his gaze down and taking a swipe with his tongue over the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex.

“Yes,” Evelyn agreed. “Yes yes yes.” Her words weren’t in response to anything anymore, just mindless chanting. It was overwhelming to have every part of her touched like this. There was a hand and a mouth on her breasts, fingers pushing into her in quick, hard thrusts, a tongue lapping at the top of her sex.

The physical pleasure was incredible, and yet there was something in this emotional certainty and joy that also pushed her closer to her end. Her fingers tightened in two sets of hair and she heard matching groans from her lovers. The evidence of their enjoyment was enough to send her over the edge.

She heard herself moaning loudly, unable to do anything about her voice as the orgasm tore through her, rocking her entire body. The sensation went on and on, with neither of her lovers stopping what they were doing to her.

“All enough, oh, enough,” she mumbled. If she were to be anything more than a limp ragdoll for the next round, she needed a respite.

Alistair and Cullen pulled away at her words, and Evelyn was left catching her breath.

“I love it when we get to a point when even the greedy queen has had enough,” she heard Cullen say, his breath a warm puff over her stomach.

Evelyn cracked one lid open to try and glare at him, but even her eyes were worn out.

“I’ll have my revenge,” she warned.

“I’m looking forward to it,” Cullen responded, far too pleased with himself.

“I offer my services as co-conspirator in the revenge plot,” Alistair offered.

“Are you worried yet, Cullen?”

“No. Not really.” He laughed, and then laughed again when Evelyn pulled on his hair.

With a sigh, she turned to running her fingers over his scalp lightly, soothingly. Alistair shook his head at her side, and she started doing the same to him.

“I don’t think anyone’s ever had a better engagement night,” she mused.
“And it’s not even over,” Cullen said. “But I feel like you need a break.”

At first Evelyn wished to protest, but the thought better of it. She had to be somewhat reasonable. It was all going to be much more enjoyable for everyone if all parties were at full strength.

“I do. I wouldn’t say no to some wine to help me recover.”

“Whatever the queen desires.” Cullen shot her one last smug grin, before getting up and out to the other chamber.

“I meant it when I said I’ll join you in that ‘revenge’,” Alistair said in a low voice. “We must plan something spectacular for the wedding night, knock the breath out of him.”

“You’re on,” Evelyn responded with a smile. Her mind was already turning. It was certain that during the wedding everyone was going to be focused on her and Alistair, with Cullen left at the side - for the wedding night they’d have to make sure he knew that he was an equal part of this marriage.

She’d have to return to those plans at a later date - Cullen returned with a bottle and a glass, and put them on the night table, before turning to go.

“Where are you going?” Evelyn questioned.

“To get the other two glasses?”

“Stay. We don’t need them.” Evelyn crawled towards the night table, grabbed the bottle and took a long drink. “See?”

She extended the bottle to Cullen who took it from her, smiled and put it to his lips.

“I don’t remember the last time I drank anything out of the bottle,” he said, settling back down on the bed and passing the bottle to Alistair.

“We have to be so prim and proper all the time,” Evelyn said. “We need breaks from that. No corsets, no glasses, nothing polite.”

“The only advantage of glasses is that we can toast with them, and I’d definitely toast to not being polite for a time,” Alistair responded.

“Here is where you’re not thinking big enough - we can each have a bottle and toast that way.” Evelyn took the bottle from him and drank.

“Brilliant!” Alistair exclaimed. “Isn’t she brilliant?”

“The wisest of queen,” Cullen agreed, trying to stifle a laugh. “Although it sounds a bit like something Isabela would’ve suggested.”

“I know it wasn’t meant as a compliment, but I’ll take it as such. She’s amazing. If I weren’t to become a queen, I’d certainly consider a life of piracy with her.”

Cullen made a face, before drinking.

“I have moral reservations about piracy, but more than that, being on the sea for any amount of time sounds terrible,” he said, shuddering.

“So much for my fantasy of ruling the seas with an iron fist, my two quartermasters at my sides.” Evelyn sighed and laughed.
“I don’t know - all that booty sounds pretty appealing.” Alistair grinned, before taking a pull from the bottle.

Cullen groaned.

“I draw the line at pirate puns,” he said.

“You’re not interested in my treasure chest?” Evelyn teased.

“What would that even be? Your chest or…”

“I think she’s a treasure all around,” Alistair announced.

“You’re terrible,” Evelyn said, nonetheless moving close to kiss him. “You can plunder me any time,” she added after parting.

“That was by far the worst,” Cullen complained.

“I’ll make more unless you shut me up,” Evelyn warned.

In a blink of an eye, Cullen was kissing her, and there were no more puns in her mind. The wine invigorated her, and she kissed her lover with renewed energy.

When he moved away, Evelyn let out a pathetic whine, her lips still tingling. She watched Cullen move up the bed, finally resting with his back to the headboard.

“Ready?” he asked, extending a hand to her.

“So so ready,” she responded, accepting his hand, moving towards him on her knees, finally throwing one leg over his lap to straddle him.

She looked down on him from her vantage point, at his flushed cheeks, shining amber eyes and messy hair. She cupped his cheek, tender feelings overtaking her at the sight of his dear face. And then she felt his hand going to her behind, fingers digging into the soft flesh, and she forgot all sentimentality. She braced herself against his arms and positioned herself over his cock, starting to sink down.

Usually she savored that part, going inch by inch, slowly feeling herself being stretched, but this time she was beyond wet and took him in in one swift movement, sinking to the hilt in seconds. They both groaned. Evelyn remained like that for a moment, just enjoying the feeling of being joined with him, even if every instinct in her was screaming for her to move. Cullen prompted her to do that, one hand on her arse and another on her hip initiating the movement, which she picked up, lifting up, before sinking back down.

“Do you need a formal invitation to join us?” Cullen asked, looking behind her to where Alistair sat.

“I know I don’t, but I get lost in watching you sometimes and I’m afraid of disturbing the perfect picture before me,” the king responded.

“You won’t disturb anything,” Evelyn said, turning her head to look at him. “Come here. I need you,” she added, offering her hand.

Without another word, he took it, inching closer to them.

“A moment,” he said, stopping to rummage through the nightstand drawer.
Unable to stay still, Evelyn ground her hips, Cullen aiding in her movements.

At last Alistair managed to produce a vial of oil from the drawer, and uncorked it with a triumphant sigh. Evelyn watched him apply a generous amount to his cock, making the thick length glisten.

“Do you…” he started to ask.

Evelyn shook her head.

“As I said, I’m very ready,” she said.

That was enough assurance for Alistair. He moved behind her, his hand first going to her sides, slightly slick fingers running up her sides and back down again to her hips, turning to her front, going from her stomach to her breasts.

“Don’t tease me,” she pleaded, even if her body sang at the contact.

“Again, got a bit lost there,” Alistair responded sheepishly, removing his hands from her breasts and taking hold of her arse.

Momentarily, she felt the head of his cock nudging at her entrance. She tilted her hips back, encouraging him. She knew what to expect, got familiar with the feeling, which before seemed so foreign. As he pressed in, movements slow and deliberate, she dug her fingers into Cullen’s arms, needing to anchor herself. Her lovers held her as well, steady, strong hands keeping her in place. Her eyes drifted closed, her head falling forward, forehead resting against Cullen’s, her panting breath fanning over his lips.

Tentatively, she angled her hips further, pulling Alistair in deeper, feeling Cullen moving in her as well, and heard herself whine, her head thrown back. There were lips on her neck and her back now, leaving trails of warmth in their wake, interrupted by heavy breaths, hot puffs of air on her skin. She moved again and they surged with her, within her. Her head spun for a second, her body not entirely her own, somehow melting into those of her lovers, seemingly becoming one with them.

With one more push, Alistair was fully inside her. That very first time, all those months ago, she would admit to being slightly worried, but now it felt easy, her body free from any tension, expecting nothing but overwhelming pleasure. Which was exactly what she was feeling, stretched almost to the limit, full in the best way possible.

She didn’t move for a moment, trying to catalogue every feeling, remember every sensation. This was the night of her engagement. She promised herself to those two men that morning and now she was reaffirming that commitment with her body. She needed this entire day and night to be burned into her memory, for every second to be clear to her even decades in the future. She needed to be able to recall the warmth and friction, the heavy smell in the air, the sound of their ragged breathing.

“Are you alright?” Cullen asked, one hand moving to her face, swiping a damp lock of hair from her forehead.

“Mmm,” she hummed in confirmation. “Perfect moments are rare – I need to remember this one.”

But it wasn’t going to be perfect if she remained in her head, keeping her lovers from achieving their pleasure, so she lifted herself up, feeling the stretch in the muscles of her thighs, and the drag of two cocks against her inner walls. Before she could get too far, two pairs of hands were pulling her back, that friction inside her increasing. She moved up again, quicker, with more power, and again felt hands digging into her flesh, wrenching her down. She liked that, a lot. That push and pull, that strength directed against her, for her.
With her eyes closed, it seemed like she felt more, with that one sense cut out. There was a bead of sweat rolling down over her spine, and that was somehow registering sharply. There was the tangy smell of sweat and their passion in the air, somehow not unpleasant, as she’d expect it should be. She moved again, was pulled back again, and another droplet of sweat rolled down her neck and between her breasts. More cooling beads of perspiration dotted her skin as they continued their delightful struggle.

How long could she keep this up? The day’s been long and this was the fourth time they were coming together in so many hours. Strength was slowly leaving her, but she valiantly fought against the sluggishness taking hold of her limbs.

It was a losing battle. As they pulled her down again, she tipped slightly forward, her torso flush against Cullen’s.

“Can’t keep up?” he teased, his voice low and slightly ragged.

“You sound winded yourself,” Evelyn shot back.

She pushed herself up again, but wasn’t able to right herself, her breasts dragging over Cullen’s chest with her movement, causing him to groan.

“We have nothing to prove,” came Alistair’s gentle admonishment. “I’ve been up since before dawn and I’m not exactly at full strength,” he added, his fingers gliding over her skin soothingly as he pulled her down over their erections. “It’s good like this, too. Slow, thorough.”

He pressed against Evelyn’s back firmly, not leaving any space between them.

“Yes, that’s good, gooood,” Evelyn slurred her last word, letting go, surrendering herself to this new feeling.

She was almost squeezed between them, the ridges of their muscles rubbing against her back and chest. She looped her arms behind Cullen’s neck, cheek to cheek with him now.

“Good?” she whispered her question into his ear.

“Perfect,” he responded.

There was a soft wet sound next to her, and she realized Alistair was kissing him, reaching towards him from behind her shoulder.

With how close they were, their arms entwined over her in crisscrossing patterns. They were holding each other as much as her now, and for a mad moment she wondered if they truly weren’t going to become one person.

Their movements were deliberate, the slide of their bodies aided by the sheen of sweat gathered on their skin. She was lifting her hips just a fraction and they were following her movement, pushing in and then the three of them were sliding back down together. Pressure, which at first was quickly building in her, was now steadily inching towards the inevitable.

“I’m close,” she breathed out. “Please…”

At her words, she felt them move with renewed determination, a surge within her, a push and pull, their hold on her tightening. There was also a hand moving between their slick bodies, inching in despite the tight press of flesh, before finding its way to her nether lips, a calloused finger reaching its target, circling her swollen nub. She moaned at the new sensation, almost at the breaking point,
feelings within and without her near overwhelming.

“Let go.” “Come.” Two deep voices whispered at her ears.

“My wife.” “My queen.” She heard next.

“My…” she tried to respond, but she was too far gone for words, pleasure seizing her, her body wracked by it, her voice something inarticulate and primal.

She felt them join her, a warm rush inside her, harsh panting in her ears, fingers digging into her flesh, surely leaving marks she’d love seeing every day until they faded.

When she was more or less back in control of her own faculties, she realized Cullen had to be nearly crushed under her and Alistair’s weight.

“Can you still breathe?” she asked him, somewhat concerned.

“If it’s a joke about you two taking my breath away…”

“Nothing of that sort. I’m actually asking. Alistair, we should probably move off him.”

“Yes, right, sorry. I’m just so boneless,” the king mumbled.

Behind her, Alistair started slowly disentangling his limbs from theirs, and then he was pulling out of Evelyn, making her gasp a little as the oversensitive nerves sparked again at the contact.

“I could breathe, for the record,” Cullen said, as Evelyn was parting from him, making herself breathe out harshly as his cock slipped out of her, “but it was getting damnable hot and sticky.”

“Yes, sticky,” Evelyn agreed, rolling to her back next to him. “I’m sticky all over. I don’t mind very much at the moment, but soon someone will have to get water and towels.”

“In a moment,” came the almost simultaneous response from both men sprawled at her sides.

She chuckled at the reaction.

“Worn out, are you?”

“We have to pace ourselves or we risk death out of sexual exhaustion before the wedding can even take place,” Alistair joked.

“I think death is rather unlikely, but we’re setting the bar dangerously high for the wedding night,” Cullen countered.

“We’ll figure something out, I’m sure. Can we skip to that already? To after the Exalted Council with all the negotiations and meetings. And after all the wedding preparations and the move from Skyhold to Denerim. They’ll wear us out before we get our happy ending,” Evelyn muttered, picturing the chaos that was surely going to ensue.

“We already got a happy ending just now.”

With great effort, Evelyn lifted herself up on her elbow to gape at Cullen, who was smirking shamelessly.

“You, my good ser, are getting worse and worse,” she told him with a grin.
“I’ve never been so proud of my bad influence on someone,” Alistair said, sounding very impressed indeed. “Don’t worry about all those things ahead of us, Evelyn,” he added, now serious. “We’ll get through everything together.”

“It will be worth it,” Cullen agreed. “Even all the hours you’ll spend with Leliana and the dressmakers.”

“Yes, it will,” Evelyn conceded, despite shuddering inwardly at the thought of Leliana stuffing her into dozens of tight garments to try out all the new styles. “We’ve saved the world already. How hard can it be to survive a royal wedding?”

Besides, that was a worry for another day. In that moment it was easy to forget future problems, when her body was still a heavy mass of satisfaction. She allowed herself to drop down, wiggling closer to Cullen, grabbing his hand, and soon felt Alistair pressing to her, his hand finding hers. They’d have to get up soon, go to their separate rooms, but not right away. They could allow themselves a few more blissful moments of resting like this.

Chapter End Notes

So... it's been a while. Like, a really long while. It's also been a really long while since I started posting this story. A year and a half today to be exact. I kinda can't believe it. Back then I had a bimonthly schedule in the 'twice a month' sense, and now it turned to the 'every two months' definition. I would've never guessed it would take me this long. For one, the story grew from what I initially thought it was going to be, and for another full time jobs suck out time and energy in a way I didn't expect as a naive student. Anyway, this is still not the end and no matter how long it takes (hopefully not another year) I will finish the story. Thank you for sticking with me, whether you've been here since march 2016 or are just stumbling on this story. It means a lot to me that you're taking the time to read it.

As always, kudos and reviews would be greatly appreciated.
As he watched trunk after trunk being loaded onto carts, Cullen wondered when did he manage to amass so much... stuff. It felt almost unreal. There were two large trunks filled with nothing but his clothes, and that was not counting his armour, which was packed separately. Who needed that much clothing? He hated to think how much it all costed, but he also knew it was a necessary evil. He wasn’t going to change people’s attitudes towards appearances, so he had to fit in, to represent his new station with appropriate dignity.

It wasn’t the first time Cullen had to pack up his entire life and move to a completely different place, but all the previous times were, at least from a logistical standpoint, easier.

When he was a boy leaving for Templar training, he couldn’t take any personal effects, so he was leaving his parent’s house with some clothes and the supposedly lucky coin his brother gave him.

After his training, as a full-fledged Templar, he was departing the refuge to move into the Circle with new clothes, a philter and an armour, sword and shield. The same happened when he was being sent to Kirkwall.

As he was leaving the city, he had even less still. He left his Templar armor behind, and he had little more than the clothes on his back. It was already in Ferelden that Leliana ordered a new armour for him.

The escape from Haven left no time for packing – he was again left with the barest minimum, but since moving into Skyhold, he was steadily gathering more and more things. He didn’t meant to, didn’t buy much, if anything, for himself, but things seemed to gather around him without his will.

For the first time in his life he actually owned books. He didn’t have to borrow them from the library – they belonged to him, some requisitioned for purposes of the Inquisition, some gifted by friends and a few he actually purchased himself. He liked having books around - there was something comforting about them, so he allowed himself not to worry about the trunks filled with them.

What truly shocked him was that an entire trunk was filled with chessboards. Almost everyone who found out he enjoyed the game immediately decided a new chessboard would make a perfect gift for him, and so now he owned dozens of them. They were covered in precious metals, intricately carved from rare wood or hewed from expensive stones. If he were to sell them all, the proceeds would probably support an entire family for two generations. But he couldn’t sell all those gifts. He tried to use all the boards at least once, justifying their existence to himself in that way.

One thing he was glad he wasn’t packing was the philter. It felt incredibly liberating to not be tethered to the thing, to not rely on it so completely. He still remembered the day he had to tell Evelyn about his withdrawals, how scared of her reaction he was, how ashamed of himself. She was so accepting, so caring then. She took his shaking hands in hers and promised things were going to be alright. In that moment, he believed her. She trusted him and that made it easier for him to trust himself. They burned his box with all its contents together, watching the flames consume the wood, then make a small blue puff of smoke. It was done. There was no turning back in his mind then, and now he stood free of the lyrium leash, watching his life slowly roll away on carts.

“One last walk over the battlements before we go?” he heard Evelyn’s voice at his side.
“Certainly.” He offered her his arm, and she slipped her small hand in the crock of his elbow. “Dori, are you joining us?” he asked, patting his thigh. His mabari happily ran up to him and followed as he moved.

They went up the stone steps slowly, almost reverently. One last walk before this part of their life was done.

“I’m going to miss this place,” Evelyn said, trailing her fingers over the stones they were passing. It felt like she was echoing Cullen’s thoughts. “It was never meant to be permanent, but for years it’s been my home. I’ve made a life for myself here, I enjoyed that life. Despite the constant threats, I felt safe. I feel like I’m leaving a tiny bit of myself here.”

The wind picked up, playing with their hair as they moved close to the railing.

“I know what you mean. So much has happened here, good and bad, but I think mostly good. I changed here, fully grew into the person I’m proud to be. I’m always going to think of this place fondly,” Cullen told her.

“Even of the time you had to run over those battlements naked after Josephine beat you at Wicked Grace?” Evelyn teased.

“I’d like to think I learned to laugh at myself more freely, so yes, that will also be a good memory,” he responded. “Isn’t that the place where you gave me Dori?” He stopped and looked around. “I think it is. She was so tiny back then, and now look at her – she’s magnificent.”

The mabari barked happily and nudged his hand with her nose, asking to be petted.

“She’s a beauty alright,” Evelyn agreed, also scratching the dog’s head. “Alistair picked her and I picked the name, so it had to work out.”

“The name. Does it mean anything?” Cullen asked. It’s been so long, but he never wondered about it before.

“It does.” Evelyn smiled. “I’ve been meaning to tell you but kept forgetting. It’s Antivan for ‘gift of love’.”

Cullen looked at his lover, at the dog, and then again at Evelyn.

“That’s very beautiful,” he said in a quiet tone. “Does that mean that if I had the presence of mind to ask you about it before, I would’ve found out about your intentions earlier?”

“I was hoping you wouldn’t.” Evelyn laughed. “If you did, I’d probably have to lie, since you weren’t ready for that then.”

“No, I wasn’t. Good thing I wasn’t very inquisitive, then.”

Dori was done being petted, it appeared, and ran ahead of them. Cullen and Evelyn followed.

“I’m excited for our new life, beyond excited, and yet…” Evelyn hesitated for a moment. “I wonder if I’ll be a good queen. This is such tremendous responsibility.”

“Of course you will be!” Cullen had no doubt in his mind. “You already had practice ruling. This will be different, but nothing you won’t be able to take on. And you won’t be alone. Together we’ll be able to do anything we set our minds to.”
“You sound so certain,” Evelyn murmured.

“That’s because I am. Perhaps it’s easier for me not to worry, since I won’t be paraded around as much, put on display so prominently, but you’ll do wonderfully. We’ll be with you every step of the way. But you don’t need us. You could rule a country all on your own and be perfect at it.”

“Thank you, love, that’s very kind of you to say, but I do need you. And you’re right – it’s not the ruling itself that has me worried, but rather the pomp and ceremony, the constant games. I’ve relied on Josephine so much for dealing with nobility and now that will be my daily life. I know war and strategy, but will I be able to wrangle banns and teryns?”

“Alistair’s been doing this for over a decade, with help from his advisers, and without any disrespect to our beloved king, he’s not much of a diplomat. Your addition will only help.”

Evelyn laughed.

“See? This is what I need you for. You’re my rock,” she said fondly, lying her head against his arm for a moment.

“I do worry at times,” Cullen admitted. “I worry that with all our duties we’ll be too tired to be as we were. Before, we were visiting, it was a special time when we could be free of daily obligations, but now...”

“That won’t happen,” Evelyn said, her voice full of resolve. “We’ll have plenty of time to ourselves. We’ll make time. And we’ll make it work. You don’t doubt our love, do you?”

“No, I don’t.” As he said those words, he knew them to be true. “I only fear that the daily grind will kill the passion. I know it’s absurd, but...”

“No more absurd than my worries,” Evelyn assured. “Work hasn’t killed anything between the two of us, so I’m sure the same will hold true for the three of us. But it’s good that you brought that up. I want to know of your worries. And I’ll certainly remember to try and not fall into a routine. At least one pair of my underwear per month has to be destroyed in a fit of passion.”

“That sounds like a routine.”

“Oh hush up.” Evelyn shook her head and laughed.

They’ve made it almost all the way around the battlements, and now stood by the railing, staring out on the jagged snow-covered mountains before them.

“It’s so beautiful,” Evelyn sighed. “Perhaps we’ll visit someday.”

“I’m sure we will. The children will be more than happy to see a queen, I’m sure.”

During the negotiations the matter of Skyhold looked to be a difficult one, but Evelyn solved it rather quickly. The castle was to become an orphanage, a place where children from both Ferelden and Orlais who’ve lost their parents could grow up and learn a trade, at the same time learning about each other, to combat national prejudices.

No-one could object to such a purpose. The castle wasn’t going to be posing a threat to either nation, and after all the unrest connected to Corypheus and the mage-templar war, there were plenty of children in need of a shelter. In case of any future conflict, Skyhold was to remain a safe haven for refugees.
“I hope they’ll be happy here. This place has so much to give, such potential.”

“Great men and women will grow up here, thanks to you. That’s another example of why you’ll be a great queen.”

“I’m not sure about great - I’ll settle for good, but I appreciate the sentiment.”

They stood in silence for a while, just gazing into the distance.

“I think I’m ready,” Evelyn said at last. “Out there is our new home. Skyhold served us splendidly, but it does not belong to us any longer.” She patted the stones affectionately. “Are you ready to go?”

“I am.” Cullen nodded and lead her through the last section of the battlements, before descending to the courtyard.

“Goodbye,” Cullen murmured under his breath to the castle when, sometime later, they were riding through the gate. He wasn’t sad, just a bit wistful. The future looked bright, but still it was not very easy to completely let go of a place where so many good memories resided.

Arriving at Denerim palace was like a homecoming. It wasn’t the place itself that made Cullen feel welcome, though. It was the man who was awaiting him there, the man with whom he and the woman they both loved were going to make a life. Home wasn’t so much about chambers and gardens, as it was about belonging, and they belonged together.

Just like the first time Cullen and Evelyn came to the city, Alistair was far too impatient to remain on the landing, but this time he truly outdid himself, standing watch right by the gate, handsome as ever, and doubly so when the anxious expression on his face turned to joy upon seeing them. The moment they were through the gate, he was helping Evelyn off her horse. She clung to him for a moment and then allowed him to embrace Cullen, after he got off his own mount.

“Welcome home,” Alistair told them, the biggest smile on his face. “Maker, I’ve waited so long to say this to you.”

“And we’ve waited to hear it,” Cullen told him.

“It’s so good to be home.” Evelyn looked around and quickly grabbed their hands, squeezing affectionately. It was her unspoken way of saying what they all knew - that home was the three of them together, wherever they were.

Cullen itched to gather them to his chest, feel them close, but restrained himself, instead only looking at them and smiling, thinking how this was it, their happy ending, the welcome without a farewell in sight.

“The wedding preparations are already underway, so it’s rather hectic, but your quarters are ready. Would you like to see them?” Alistair offered after some time.

“It’s such a nuisance that I have to have my own quarters before the wedding.” Evelyn sighed, nonetheless moving towards the palace.

“Propriety. What can you do?” Alistair shrugged, following her. “We have to pretend I’m wedding a virginal bride, untouched and pure.”
Evelyn snorted.

“I know it, but still it rankles. That’s so absurdly antiquated. I’m rather certain I won’t be a worse queen for having had a cock in me.”

“Undoubtedly. I’m not a worse king for having had a cock in me,” Alistair responded easily, as they walked through the courtyard.

“Let’s wait till we’re alone to talk of…” Cullen lowered his voice, “cock.” Maker, but those two were incorrigible. Still, he loved their irreverent sense of humor, which definitely rubbed off on him. At the same time, he remained the most reasonable one, having to reign them in in public. That was a burden he gladly carried.

“Point taken.” Alistair laughed. “How about interior decoration, then? Since you live here now, you’ll be able to make any changes you wish, like perhaps, removing that Maker forsaken portrait of my great great cousin from the smaller dining room. His eyes follow you wherever you are. Creepy.”

“It sounds to me like you want us to be your scapegoats,” Cullen commented, arching a brow at Alistair as they ascended the steps to the landing.

“Scapegoats? Why I’d never…” Alistair protested, but quickly gave up. “Please, I hate the thing so much, but Tegan won’t allow me to take it down. Precious heirloom my arse. If my new wife demanded in very strong terms that it be removed, on the other hand…”

“If is is to be my home, then no painting can follow me with its wanton eyes. My modesty won’t allow it,” Evelyn declared, entering the palace.

“You truly are the greatest of women!” Alistair exclaimed.

As they walked in, Cullen enjoyed the sense of familiarity he experienced. He knew all those stones, those sculptures, those tapestries. He was aware of where each corridor and set of doors led. Understanding the layout of a place always helped put him at ease, and so on their first visit he explored all that the palace had to offer.

“Anything I can help with?” he inquired, as they were moving towards the guest wing.

“I think you’ve seen the weird taxidermy bear the last time you were here. I’ve stuck it in one of the offices by the war room…”

“Consider it gone, on order of your new Commander,” Cullen promised. That bear really was an eyesore.

“You two are life savers. But speaking of offices - we each have one by the war room. I thought it’d be too much if we were to work together in one chamber. For one, we wouldn’t get much done, and for another I think everyone needs a bit of time alone. Still, we’ll be close.”

“A very wise decision,” Evelyn complimented.

“I’ve furnished them as best I could, but we can change things,” Alistair told them. “I really want you to make this place your own. You can throw away things, add things, rearrange things. Whatever you want. Say it and it’s done.”

It was sweet how much Alistair cared about their comfort, how he took pains to make sure they knew this space belonged to them as well, but he needn’t fret. Cullen was about to tell him so, when Evelyn beat him to the punch.
“We won’t deplete your coffers by remodeling the whole palace. It’s rather lovely as is, I think.” Evelyn pointed to the intricate stained glass windows adorning the hall they were passing through. “You have… We have,” she corrected herself quickly, smiling at the word, “the most beautiful library, a splendid throne room, cozy private chambers and breathtaking gardens, just to name a few. Some small changes will certainly be necessary, but nothing drastic. Besides, things are not the most important. I’d be happy just about anywhere, as long as you two were there.”

“How am I supposed not to kiss you after you say things like that?” Alistair shook his head, smiling.

“One kiss won’t take that long. And we’re right by Evelyn’s rooms, if I’m not mistaken,” Cullen observed, noticing that they were nearing the doors to the chambers Evelyn occupied on their first visit.

“An astute observation,” Alistair responded with a grin.

Soon they were in the chamber, and one kiss turned into two, into five, into the three of them panting harshly against each other’s flesh, trying to restrain themselves.

“I think we should stop,” Evelyn mumbled, not sounding happy about the prospect.

“Agreed,” Cullen muttered, equally unenthused.

“Fiiiine.” Alistair sighed. “Let’s go to Cullen’s chambers. Those are going to be permanent, even if you’re not going to be spending much time in them.”

Cullen nodded, rather curious. For most of his life he didn’t have a place of his own, first sharing one room with his siblings, then with fellow templars, until Skyhold, where he took possession of a tower which was falling apart. He enjoyed that, a bit of peace and quiet, space he could utilise how he saw fit, without disturbing anyone or being bothered in turn. He knew his new chambers were surely going to be spacious and well kept, but he truly cared about one thing and one thing only - how quickly he was going to be able to get through some secret passage to Alistair and Evelyn’s rooms.

“I wish you could move in with us,” Evelyn said, when they marched through an empty corridor to the most private wing of the palace. “We could say you’re there to guard us, our brave Commander always at the ready to serve and protect.”

“I don’t think that would’ve gone over well. People would definitely start gossiping about how exactly I serve in your bedchamber,” Cullen responded. He wouldn’t even entertain such a fanciful idea.

Sometimes he thought that Evelyn was more bothered by their situation than he was. Yes, it was not easy, and yes, he would’ve like to share a room with them or be able to hold their hands in public, but that was not going to happen and dwelling on it was only serving to sour their joy. They were still getting so much more than most people. Cullen was getting so much more than he thought possible in his life. Small inconveniences were nothing compared to what they had together.

Perhaps it was unkind of him to think so, but at times he attributed those sentiments to Evelyn’s upbringing and life experience. She was rather used to getting everything she ever wanted, having been born into a life of privilege. She wasn’t like most nobility, didn’t think herself better than others just because of her family name, didn’t demand absurd things or act very spoiled, but she’s never had to go without something, compromise, go for second or third best. Even as the Inquisitor she eventually got exactly what she desired.

Now, in this, in love, she was encountering things she couldn’t change through her power, will or
force, and it wasn’t easy for her to accept. She was mostly sad or angry on his behalf, because she
cared for him so deeply and felt any injustice done to him as her own, but Cullen had years to get
used to things not turning out as he’d wish them to, and so this couldn’t bother him as much it did
her. He’d have to explain that to her soon and hope she’d understand, take his words at face value
and not as platitudes meant to make her feel better.

“It won’t be the same as sharing our chambers, but we’re very well connected,” Alistair informed
them cheerfully, stopping in front of large doors, which were the only ones in the entire long
corridor.

“Aren’t we underneath your quarters?” Cullen asked, after consulting his memory of the palace
layout.

“That we are. You already know this palace inside and out, it appears,” Alistair said, sounding
impressed. “Do you want to go in?”

The moment Cullen nodded, Alistair opened the double doors with a theatrical flourish. They entered
into a large and well lit chamber. On the walls to their left and right there was a series of doors. Far
too many doors. What could be behind them? Who needed that many rooms?

He followed Alistair as he opened each of the doors, presenting sitting rooms, an office, a small
library, a bathing chamber with an absurdly large tub, a dressing room, a small guest room, a
chamber which looked to serve only as a storage space for old suits of armor and finally a
bedchamber, dominated by a large four poster bed.

“For a second there I thought there was going to be a room just for all the chessboards I’ve been
gifted,” Cullen said, walking into the chamber.

“Do you not like it?” There was worry in Alistair’s tone, and Cullen immediately regretted his
flippant words.

“No, I love it, it’s all very beautiful.” And it was, each room filled with fine furniture of dark wood,
contrasting with light walls, decorated with tasteful paintings and tapestries. “It’s just so… big. I
knew it was going to be a lot, but this… It’s too much. Especially since I won’t be spending that
much time here.” He winked at the king, which seemed to put him at ease.

“Then it’s a good thing you didn’t actually get the finest apartments.” Alistair laughed. “My steward
was of the opinion that this isn’t good enough for the commander of my armies, but I held firm -
those finer apartments don’t have this.” Alistair moved to a bookshelf, pushed something behind it,
and it swung outwards, like a door. “It will take you right to our bedchamber.”

“That’s the only thing I care about,” Cullen said, walking up to Alistair to embrace him.

“You’re so easy.” Alistair chuckled, embracing him in turn, and reaching out a hand to Evelyn, who
went easily, pressing herself to them. “Oh, but speaking of our bedchamber,” he continued after they
parted, “my steward was truly appalled when I told him that Evelyn was going to be moving into my
chambers, instead of occupying her own adjacent chambers, but I held firm on that one as well.”

“A very oldfashioned man, it appears,” Evelyn observed.

“I think he’s 150 years old, but still he doesn’t want to retire to the countryside. I don’t wish to hurt
his feelings so I keep him around.” Alistair shrugged.

“Poor man - if he knew your true intentions when it came to the location of Cullen’s rooms, he’d
likely faint.” Evelyn laughed, but quickly stilled, before practically jumping to the hidden passage,
pushing the bookshelf closed. “The servants are at the doors,” she announced.

“I should let you rest and get settled,” Alistair said, casting a furtive glance at the bed. “In the evening there’ll be an official dinner to welcome you to Denerim, but afterwards we should see if the mattress on this bed is adequate.”

“I believe we should put it to some very strenuous test,” Evelyn agreed, smirking. “Nothing but the best for our commander, after all.”

Cullen was about to respond, when there was a knock on the doors.

“Enter.” he called out to the servant, looking at his lovers apologetically. They only smiled at him in understanding. This was the time for practical things, but when the night came they were going to make up for it.

The mattress proved more than adequate, as did the couch, the tub (the absurd size now made sense to Cullen) and his desk. Over the coming days they’ve worked out a rhythm, meeting for breakfast, working through the day and in the night making their way through every one of his rooms.

Cullen spend his days meeting with new subordinates and familiarizing himself with his predecessor’s papers. He rather enjoyed the work, quickly noting down ideas for small improvements he wanted to make.

Alistair and Evelyn, on the other hand, were preoccupied with wedding preparations, which he didn’t envy. Flower arrangements were never his strong suit and if he were to give his opinion on the seating chart, he’d be at a complete loss. Leliana and Josephine, who arrived a few days after Cullen and Evelyn, lended their invaluable assistance, for which both the king and future queen were eternally grateful.

Their other friends were also successively joining them, making the evening meals so much more enjoyable with their easy banter, and providing a good excuse for them to shirk their duties during the day in order to be good hosts to their guests.

Every new arrival was an exciting moment, but one was rather nerve wracking for Cullen. He and Alistair stood at the top of the stairs, flanking Evelyn, who was practically bouncing on her feet. She was excited, that would’ve been plain to see, even if she didn’t constantly spoke of brother’s arrival ever since she got his letter.

Cullen found out how much Maxwell meant to her very early on in Skyhold. She scolded him when she found out about his delinquency in corresponding with Mia. She wrote to Maxwell each week, she told him. He was informed of every important thing that happened to her and she knew of all his comings and goings. Cullen was sure his relationship with his siblings wasn’t as close as hers with Maxwell, since he had far less time with his brother and sisters, having departed for Templar training as a youth, but still he took her advice and started writing to Mia.

After all that time, Cullen felt like he almost knew Maxwell. Evelyn from time to time mentioned that her brother would enjoy a particular activity or would hate a certain person. Since their relationship started, she read Maxwell’s letters out loud to her lovers. The eldest Trevelyan sounded very similar to his sister – brave, witty, honest and passionate.

Cullen was fairly certain they were going to get along, but still he was somewhat worried. Evelyn loved her brother dearly and if the three most important men in her life wouldn’t get along, it would
cause her a lot of grief. He wasn’t as bothered by the idea of meeting her parents and brother and sister as he was about making an impression on Maxwell. Even if none of them would know what he truly was to their daughter and sister, he wished for them to like him, but if Lord and Lady Trevelyan and their middle children didn’t take to him, it wouldn’t be a disaster. Evelyn didn’t have a particularly close relationship with them, but Maxwell was her dearest relation.

Cullen could see Alistair crossing and uncrossing his arms over his chest, clearly as nervous as he was. Evelyn seemed oblivious to their plight, her eyes trained on the gate. When it moved a fraction, she gasped, her bouncing intensifying. When the gate fell open, a lone figure on a chestnut horse came into view. From up the stairs Cullen couldn’t see much. He only noticed an extravagant blue and violet jacket and a flash of light hair, which looked to resemble Evelyn’s honey blond tresses.

Ever impatient, Evelyn grabbed the sides of her long dress and bounded down the stairs. Cullen and Alistair exchanged a look, making an unspoken decision not to follow her, in order to give her a moment alone with her brother.

Maxwell was quickly dismounting and opening his arms to his sister, who lunged herself at him. The man stumbled only a step, before regaining his composure, picking Evelyn up and twirling her in circles. Their laughter echoed over the stones when he put her down. Next, Maxwell grabbed his sister by the shoulders and was apparently looking her over carefully. At last he let go, just to reach for her hair, pulling out the pins holding her updo in place. Evelyn shoved at his shoulder but then laughed, shaking out her hair.

“Maker, look at them,” Alistair whispered. “They’re so happy to see each other. I pray he doesn’t hate us.”

“I’m sure he won’t,” Cullen reassured him, trying to sound certain.

They would find out soon enough. Evelyn took her brother under the arm, and was leading him towards the stairs. Cullen felt his heart hammering within his chest harder and harder the closer they got.

Now he could see more of Maxwell. He was not a large man, not much taller than Evelyn, but he was definitely strong, with broad shoulders and thick arms. His honey blond hair was pulled into a short ponytail, a few strands escaping, falling over his large blue eyes, so much like his sister’s. His nose might’ve resembled Evelyn’s at some point, but it was clear it had been broken and not set correctly, a bump in the center and the tip slightly skewed to the side. His lips were thinner than Evelyn’s, but they stretched in the same mischievous smile, white teeth showing. They could never be mistaken for twins, but the family resemblance between them was strong.

At last they reached the top of the stairs and stopped right in front of Cullen and Alistair. Evelyn flashed them a quick smile before turning to her brother.

“Max, I’d like to introduce King Alistair Theirin of Ferelden and Ser Cullen Rutherford of Honnleath, your new brothers in law,” she said.

Cullen thought his mind was playing tricks on him. He must’ve misheard her words, he was telling himself, but the confusion on Maxwell’s face convinced him that Evelyn indeed said what he thought she did. His heart was in his throat, almost choking him.

“Brothers?” Maxwell asked, his tone strangely calm.

“Yes. Two for the price of one,” Evelyn responded, dashing Cullen’s hopes of rectifying the situation with a joke.
And then the unexpected happened. Maxwell Trevelyan grinned broadly and laughed.

“Sis! I’m so proud of you!” he exclaimed, hugging her.

Cullen and Alistair exchanged a confused gaze, both at a loss as to what was happening.

“Here I thought you were turning conventional, saving the world and then marrying a king,” Maxwell told Evelyn, “but you’re pursuing your own happiness, in your own way, just like I taught you.” He patted her head, and laughed as Evelyn shook off his hand. “But I’m being awfully rude. I’m so pleased to meet my new brothers!”

Before Cullen knew what was happening, Maxwell was pulling him into a hug, slapping his back heartily, before doing the same to equally dumbfounded Alistair.

“The pleasure is ours, my lord,” the king responded when the older Trevelyan let go of him.

“My lord? Let’s dispense with formalities. I’m to be your brother. Call me Max.”

“Of course, Max.” Alistair smiled. “I do like the idea of having a brother,” he said, almost as if to himself.

“You’ll get another one, and a sister to boot, from our side. They’re good people, Flora and Anthony are, dreadfully boring, but good.”

“Max!” Evelyn elbowed her brother.

“What? They are boring, you said it yourself.”

“They are.” Evelyn sighed. “But we love them.”

“We do. In a way,” Maxwell conceded. “But believe me, you’ve already met the best the Trevelyan clan has to offer.”

“I have no doubt,” Alistair responded.

“You just looked at my sister with boundless admiration, but I’ll pretend you meant me.”

“You’re surely the most interesting male Trevelyan,” Alistair corrected himself.

“That’s for certain.” Maxwell smirked. “You’re being terribly quiet, Cullen.”

“I’m sorry.” Cullen shifted uneasily. “I wasn’t expecting to be introduced as… as your brother in law,” he admitted.

“Evelyn, you minx!” Maxwell laughed. “You didn’t worn the poor man?”

“I wanted it to be a surprise. I wanted to see your shocked expressions,” Evelyn told them, a bit sheepishly, probably only now understanding how truly nervous Cullen was. “I swear, I’m not going to tell mother and father or Flora and Anthony about you – they wouldn’t take it well, I’m sure, but Max had to know. At least one person from my family has to know you’re joining it, and I have no secrets from Max.”

“Well, you did keep this secret up until now,” Maxwell accused.

“How do you suppose I should’ve put that in a letter that anyone could intercept? ‘Dear Max, it’s me, your sister, the Inquisitor, a practically holy figure who shouldn’t be embroiled in any sort of
scandal. I’m in love with two men – the king of Ferelden and my very own Commander. Hope everything’s good with you as well.’ Does that sounds like something I could send, hmm?”

“Fine, fine!” Maxwell threw his hands up in resignation. “But you kept me guessing for the longest time. At first I knew you were in love with Cullen, writing about how amazing and brave and honorable and sweet he was.” Cullen felt himself blushing. “And you described the blushing perfectly! It’s exactly as I imagined. And so is his strong jaw and soulful amber eyes. Oh, but he blushes even more! I’m sorry, but those were my sister’s words. She had it in for you baad. Did you know?”

“Max, stop that!” Evelyn protested.

“Did you?” her brother persisted.

“I, uh, thought she may be somewhat interested in me,” Cullen admitted, feeling the deep desire to sink into the ground.

“And still you resisted her! You’ve caused her a lot of grief, and I had half a mind to hurt you for it, then, but I see everything worked out for the best.”

“I’m sorry,” Cullen muttered. It still shamed him to think that he was the cause of Evelyn’s pain. He understood Maxwell perfectly. If someone behaved in such a manner towards one of his siblings, he’d surely want to punch them in the face.

“Maxwell, stop that!” Evelyn insisted. “Don’t make Cullen feel bad. He had his reasons. And it did work out for the best.”

“It’s all in the past. You’re happy now and that’s all that matters,” Maxwell decided.

“I truly am sorry,” Cullen told him.

“He’s more than made up for it,” Evelyn declared.

“I’m glad to hear that,” Maxwell said. “But getting back to my perpetual confusion. When you came to Skyhold, Alistair, her letters were full of gushing about how funny you are, how you understand her perfectly. There was also something about tall imposing frame and large hands, and yes, that same blushing. Maker, I never knew she had a thing for blushing.”

“I do not! I only have a thing for them, and they’re terribly blushy.”

“Whatever you say, sis.” Maxwell winked. “I thought she was starting to seek out someone who’d reciprocate her feelings, but she kept also mentioning you, Cullen. I figured you remained friends, and that Alistair warmed up to you as well. How wrong I was! I’ve underestimated my dear sweet sister terribly. Will you forgive me?” He clasped his hands in supplication, the gesture belayed by his laughter.

“I suppose,” Evelyn responded.

“And you’re really alright with all this?” Cullen indicated the three of them. He couldn’t stop the words from leaving his mouth. It was too strange. Evelyn’s brother was accepting this far too easily. Cullen knew Maxwell was a rogue through and through, adventurous and easy going, but this was his sister they were talking about. His sister and two men she was making her life with.

“I’m alright with anything them makes her happy, and she’s clearly very happy. I feared she grew into a terribly predictable and upstanding creature with her royal nuptials, but she’s still my wild little
sis, taking what she wants, living how she likes, even if she takes on a heaping helping of responsibilities as well."

“We’re glad to hear that,” Alistair said. “I’m sure I speak for Cullen as well when I say that it’s a huge relief to know that our odd little arrangement doesn’t make you uncomfortable.”

“What have you been telling those poor men to make them think I’d be shocked by your lovely triad?”

“Triad!” Alistair exclaimed. “That’s it! That’s the word. I knew threesome was wrong.”

They all laughed at his sudden outburst.

“I’m glad I could provide some clarity on that matter,” Maxwell told him.

“That’s been bothering me since they visited me in Denerim,” Alistair explained.

“See how brilliant and useful I am?” Maxwell smiled. “But back to my question…”

“I told them only terrible things about you – they know of your conquests and adventures, but they always worry. It’s in their nature,” Evelyn told him.

“I hope they don’t worry anymore. If that’s what they need, I give my blessing.”

“I don’t need your blessing,” Evelyn told him indignantly. “We’ve been doing very well without it, thank you very much.”

“I can see that. You’re practically glowing.” Maxwell pinched her cheek, and Evelyn slapped his hand away.

“We’re not talking about that, Max!”

“Why? For once your sex life is more interesting than mine!”

“Because I’ll start blushing, and your new brothers will explode of embarrassment. Do you want to be guilty of fratricide?”

“All right then. But I am glad for all of you, truly. For the love and tender feelings and what not, not the sex,” Maxwell added when Evelyn started opening her mouth to chastise him again. “You’re both terribly quiet again,” he said to Cullen and Alistair. “We must get to know each other better. I propose a brother’s night out. I swear I won’t be very inappropriate. What do you say?”

“That sounds nice,” Alistair responded.

“I’d like that too,” Cullen agreed.

“Sis, are you going to let those two go for a night?”

“They hardly need my permission, but if you’re asking, I would love it if you three got better acquainted.”

“Splendid! Now would anyone want to show me to my chambers? I’m exhausted, and I need my strength if I’m going to be telling my sister’s future husbands all the embarrassing stories from her youth.”

“Don’t you dare, Max!”
“I’ll be good,” he told Evelyn, but once she turned her back on him to walk to the castle, he shook his head and winked at Cullen and Alistair, before following her.

Cullen was still a bit dazed as he walked after them. Evelyn’s brother was perfectly accepting, even happy for them. He was acknowledged as equal to Alistair in his eyes, and even if it shouldn’t matter, even if only what the three of them knew was important, it pleased Cullen. Any nerves were worth it. He was gaining a new brother and he couldn’t be more glad.

Chapter End Notes

Almost two months to the day after the previous chapter, I'm back. I truly appreciate all of you who are still reading this despite my absurd breaks between updates. The next chapter will be up... next week. Yes, next week and not one fiscal quarter after this one, but that's only because I originally thought the coming to Denerim/meeting the family stuff would fit into one chapter, and it didn't. I could've posted one 13 000 word chapter, but I felt that such a huge slab of text would be a bit daunting, so I divided it into two. Next chapter Mia and Branson come to Denerim.

Again, thank you for sticking with me, and if you dropped me a line or left kudos I'd be very glad.
The closer the wedding day was, the more hectic things were becoming. Every day was a flurry of activity. It was hard to keep track of people and appointments. Planning a campaign was much more peaceful than preparing a wedding, Cullen decided.

They were all running on very little sleep, but hardly felt it, excitement propelling them on. Their days were filled with work, but rest at night was impossible. They couldn’t refuse their friends when they wanted to do something. They were all conscious of the fact that they weren’t going to be together like that again anytime soon, if ever, so they had to make the best of the time they had. There were trips to the ocean, hunts, Wicked Grace, dancing and of course drinking.

As far as that last activity was concerned, Maxwell outdid everyone else. The brother's night out proved a bit much for both Cullen and Alistair. Evelyn told them of her brother’s many talents, including how well he held his liquor, and of how he always forgot others weren’t similarly blessed, but they didn’t take her words to heart, which proved a mistake.

The night started very pleasantly, the three of them sequestered in a small private garden, undisturbed by servants, swapping stories and laughing. Maxwell started by describing Evelyn as a rambunctious little girl, playing dressup with her mother’s clothes but also sneaking away with an old bow, a precious family heirloom she was forbidden from playing with. Cullen could almost picture that - a small blue eyed girl, running around the house with a bow far too large for her, her blond hair whipping around her face. For a moment he wondered if they were going to have a little girl like that. He’d like that.

He couldn’t dwell on that too long, because Maxwell was moving on to Evelyn’s adolescent and teenage years. There were tales of Maxwell first giving Evelyn wine and her singing out loud drunkenly after less than a glass, of the two of them sneaking out of the house at night to gamble with their friends or the time Evelyn fell asleep during a morning chantry sermon, and many more.

As he talked, Maxwell drank, and encouraged Cullen and Alistair to follow suit. He teased them when they didn’t catch up, and they both tried to do as he asked, being the eager to please fools they were. Neither of them wanted to embarrass himself before their brother in law, so they drank.

When he was done with his stories, Maxwell asked them in turn to tell him of his sister’s exploits as the Inquisitor. Cullen spoke the most then, feeling fierce pride at recounting the feats accomplished by the woman he loved.

“To my sister’s health. She is amazing,” Maxwell would often say, interrupting Cullen, and they’d drink again because who would not raise a glass to the health of the most incredible woman he knew?

Cullen wasn’t sure when, but at some point the conversation turned into them laughing at stories which were more slurried out than told. How did they end up singing some terrible song Isabela taught them in the Hanged Man, and Maxwell apparently already knew, Cullen could not tell. It was equally mysterious how was it that Maxwell had his arms slung over their shoulders as he was trying to teach them some odd foreign dance that required far too much coordination, which they did not possess in their state.
Cullen felt very dizzy and rather nauseous, but didn’t say anything. It was absurd as he thought about it in his sober state, but back then it seemed to him that if he were stop their revelry, Maxwell was going to think poorly of him, and he couldn’t have that.

Alistair was also a bit green and swayed on his feet precariously from time to time, but didn’t try to end the night either.

It was the sun that saved them in the end.

“Damn!” Maxwell shouted. “The sun’ll be… ‘ll be…” he hiccuped, “up. She’ll kill me, y’know?”

“Who?” Alistair questioned.

“Evelyn!”

“She won’t. She’s good. So gooood,” Alistair protested.

“She will,” Maxwell insisted. “It’s past your bedtime.”

“It’ll be fiiiiine.” Cullen waved his hand dismissively, even though every fiber of his body was aching for him to take that opening and get to his room.

“It will be fine.” Maxwell seemed suddenly convinced. “But we go now. To bed. But where is bed?”

“I know!” Cullen shouted triumphantly. “Lesss go.”

In that moment Alistair swayed again, and Cullen moved to support him, wrapping his arm over his waist. Cullen didn’t feel particularly steady himself, but Alistair was in far worse shape. Perhaps he drank even more than Cullen did?

In that state they stumbled to Maxwell’s chamber, encountering a few bewildered guards and servants. That was not the best display to put on for them, but nothing could be done about it. It was not the worst of sins for a king to have a bit too much to drink, especially to welcome his new brother in law.

When Maxwell was safely in bed, Cullen lead Alistair to his chamber.

“He likes us, don’t he?” Alistair asked. “He must!”

“I think he does,” Cullen agreed, opening the doors.

“We’re likeable, right?”

“You’re very likeable.”

“Are you… are you… flirting with me, ser?” Alistair demanded, grinning widely.

Cullen laughed.

“You’re leading me to the bedroom, ser. What are your intentions?”

Cullen could only laugh again.

“To put you to bed and get to mine.”
“That’s not… not…”

Cullen never learned what it wasn’t, because Alistair pressed his hand to his mouth and rushed to the bathroom. Cullen followed as best he could, finding his lover on his knees, retching into a small basin.

“There, there.” He knelt next to him and patted his back.

“I thought I wouldn’t…” That statement was cut short by another wave of sickness. “I’m sorry,” Alistair mumbled pitifully.

“Is fine. Is fine.”

At last Alistair was done, his head resting on the edge of the basin.

“Sorry,” he repeated. “That’s gross. I’m sorry you saw that.”

“Tha’s marriage for you - I love you even if you vomit.”

“Love you too!”

Alistair threw his arms around him and Cullen almost fell to the floor. He needed to sleep. He was too old for that.

He managed to maneuver Alistair to his bed, and then get to his own chamber, where he promptly fell asleep without taking off a single item of clothing.

The next morning started with blinding pain, slightly lessened by a potion a servant brought him. In his mind Cullen berated the loud noises and bright lights as he slowly made his way to the smaller dining room for breakfast, but mostly he berated himself for being a fool who didn't know when to stop.

“Good morning,” Evelyn greeted him cheerfully, putting down her cup of tea.

“You were right. You warned us and we didn’t listen,” Cullen told her preemptively, shuffling towards his usual seat.

“I wasn’t going to say anything - you have it bad enough without me rubbing it in. Now eat.”

Cullen was glad to oblige in that. He fell upon his breakfast like a man starved. He was about to ask where Alistair was when the king slid in, shielding his eyes from the sun.

“I’m a fool and you’re ever wise, Evelyn,” he said. “And you are far too good to me as well, Cullen.”

“Eat,” Cullen and Evelyn told him almost simultaneously.

They were almost done when Maxwell sauntered in, looking perfectly well rested. His smile shrunk when he saw Cullen and Alistair in their miserable state.

“So, will I be murdered before breakfast or can I first get a cup of tea?” he asked.

“I told you to take it easy on them,” Evelyn said, rather acidly. That was news to Cullen. She not only warned them, but asked her brother to restrain himself, it appeared.

“I had every intention of doing so, but I got carried away. They’re very fun!”
Cullen found himself smiling at the words. An aching head and stiff muscles were worth it to hear his brother in law say such a thing.

“They are the injured parties - do you want me to kill Max for you or can he live?” Evelyn asked.

“We’ve had a great time!” Alistair rushed in to say.

“Definitely don’t kill him,” Cullen added.

“Alright.” Evelyn sighed. “You’ll live. They’re men grown and should know their limits, but still I hold you responsible. We’re not doing that again, do you hear?”

“Yes, your highness.” Maxwell bowed to her, prompting an eye roll, before joining them at the table.

“Next time you’re drinking with Bull,” Evelyn told him.

“I love a challenge.” Maxwell grinned, biting into a piece of toast.

Cullen hoped to spend the rest of the day recuperating and doing minimal work, but those plans were quickly dashed. Of all the days they could have picked, Branson and Mia chose this one to arrive in Denerim.

It was Evelyn who insisted they be invited. Cullen wanted them to see his new home, but wasn’t sure if the wedding was the best moment for that. Evelyn was of a different opinion. She was very eager to meet his family and thought it would be a treat for them to see the royal nuptials. Alistair agreed with her wholeheartedly, and so an official invitation was sent to Honnleath.

From her letter, Cullen learned that Mia almost fainted upon seeing the royal seal on a letter addressed to herself, and was half excited and half terrified for the visit. She didn’t have anything to wear, she claimed. Neither did Branson. When Evelyn heard of that problem, she demanded to have their measurements so that she could have something appropriate made for them. Cullen knew his sister was going to be feeling rather awkward about such an arrangement, but Evelyn was undeterred and send her own charming letter to Mia, which apparently put her at ease.

When that matter was settled, Cullen felt rather glad and was looking forward to seeing his siblings. He went to visit not long after the defeat of Corypheus, pushed on by Evelyn, who even before their relationship begun was very invested in his family life, but since then hadn’t seen them. This time he wasn’t going to be seeing his youngest sister, who was with child and so unable to travel, nor his nephew, who was deemed too young for such affairs, but still he was going to see Mia and Branson, and that was certainly going to be pleasant.

It turned out to be less so when they came two days earlier than planned, just when he was nursing a terrible hangover. Still, when they embraced him and told him they missed him, he felt somewhat better.

The rest of the day Cullen spend showing them around the palace, with a promise of a tour of the city the next day. In the evening they were invited to dine with the king and future queen. Cullen could see Mia fidgeting with her new dress, uncertain and nervous. Even easygoing Branson was for once tense. It made Cullen wonder if what was supposed to be pleasant for them wasn’t in truth more nerve-wracking. It wasn’t often that farmers from tiny villages were invited to the capital by royals. Neither of them knew the courtly ways and they were probably afraid of embarrassing him or displeasing their king. Cullen knew Evelyn and Alistair were going to give them the warmest of welcomes, but still the court was not a comfortable place to be in when one was not accustomed to its rules.
His worries were somewhat put to rest when the dinner came. Evelyn and Alistair were the perfect hosts - kind and attentive but not overbearing. Cullen watched as his siblings slowly relaxed, laughing at Alistair’s jokes and sharing stories from their childhood at Evelyn’s prompting. They seemed to be bonding over laughing at him, and Cullen was perfectly fine with that turn of events, pretending to be offended for their amusement.

After the main meal, they took a tour of the gardens, complete with dessert and wine on a lawn with the view of the river. As they sat there, watching the sun set over Denerim, Cullen watched the four of them - his old family and his new one, so very different and yet so similar. Maker, he loved them. He’s made mistakes with all of them - turning his back on his siblings, not writing to them in his shame and despair after everything that happened to him, and causing Evelyn pain by refusing her feelings, thinking himself inadequate for those same reasons that made him cut contact with Mia and Branson. But despite all that, they were still by his side, loving and accepting him. He was damnably lucky.

As soon as they separated from the hosts after the evening was over, both Mia and Branson couldn’t stop talking about how incredible the king and future queen were, how kind, wise, charming and beautiful. Cullen felt himself beaming with pride. He almost wished he could tell his siblings that they were more than just dear friends of his, but that was out of the question. He didn’t even seriously contemplate it as a possibility. His siblings loved him, but if he himself found it hard to come to terms with his feelings, then they would surely have a problem with his relationship. It would only make things awkward and put a strain between them. It was enough that they enjoyed themselves and had good rapport with Evelyn and Alistair.

During the following days both Alistair and Evelyn made effort to carve out a bit of time to spend with Mia and Branson, and helped to organize some diversions for them when all three of them were too busy to entertain them. Neither Mia nor Branson could be persuaded to use their given names, but Cullen was sure that his lovers were going to convince them by the end of the visit.

There was only one aspect of their visit that was causing Cullen some unease. Due to the absurd size of his chambers, Cullen could host his siblings in his very own guest room, and it reminded him a bit of sharing a room with them when they were all children. Their entire house was less than half the size of his chambers, but more space didn’t necessarily mean that he had any more privacy. Mia or Branson would barge into his bedchamber without knocking as if they owned the place.

Cullen got used to servants being mindful of his privacy and always announcing themselves, so he didn’t have to worry about being caught unawares. Now he was again on guard. Alistair and Evelyn mostly didn’t visit him at night - instead he was the one coming to them, mindful to return early enough that his siblings wouldn’t notice. It was only temporary, he kept reminding himself, trying not to get irritated at his siblings. Perhaps he would even miss those rude interruptions when they would return to Honnleath.

He almost laughed when Mia burst into his office without knocking just as he was thinking about that. Any amusement he might’ve felt was dashed when he saw the serious, worried expression on her face.

“Are you alone?” she asked.

“I am. What is it, Mia?” Cullen asked, getting up from his desk, starting to feel anxious.

“I can’t hold it in anymore,” she told him, shutting the doors firmly. “You must tell me the truth - are you carrying on an affair with Lady Evelyn?”

Cullen felt his eyes bulge out. His heart started beating madly in his chest.
“How did you…”

“So it is true!” Mia clasped her hands to her chest. “Oh, Cullen, what are you doing?”

“Mia, it’s…”

“She’s to marry a king! You claim to be his friend, you are his subject for Maker’s sake, and yet you do such a thing to him!”

“Mia…”

“This will end in a disaster! How can it not? You must stop, immediately!”

His sister wasn’t letting him get a word in, and Cullen felt rising panic. He opened his mouth to try and respond, but Mia went on undeterred.

“I’m very disappointed in you, Cullen Stanton Rutherford. How could you do such a thing to the king? You’re his commander! No honor could be greater. Is that not enough?”

“Mia!” Cullen shouted, which made her pause. Now that he could speak up, Cullen wasn’t sure what to say. Should he try and deny it all? Should he tell her he was going to break it off with Evelyn?

He thought he was temporarily saved, when his doors flew open again, this time admitting his brother.

“I need to speak with Cullen, privately,” Branson announced.

“Out of the question,” Mia told him sternly. “I’m discussing something of paramount importance with him.”

“It can’t be as important as what I came to talk to him about,” Branson insisted.

“It can’t? That is absurd!” Mia crossed her arms over her chest, staring up at Branson defiantly.

Cullen could only look on helplessly, his mind still blank.

“I’m not going to tell you what it is, but I swear to you, Mia, my issue must take priority.”

“No, it does not! I will tell you why I came to see our brother, and then perhaps you’ll apologize and help me talk some sense into him.”

‘Oh no!’ was all Cullen could think. This was getting worse by the second.

“Go ahead - try and convince me your little issue is so terrible,” Branson challenged.

“Well, Branson dear, Cullen is involved with Lady Evelyn. Involved in an affair.”

Mia looked triumphantly at Branson, who appeared absolutely shocked.

“Impossible!” he exclaimed, and Cullen wanted to embrace him in that moment. “He can’t be. He and the king are in some kind of a relationship!”

Cullen felt his face turn deep red. How could this be happening?! He swayed on his feet, feeling faint, and rested his hands on the desk to steady himself.
He noticed Mia blanche.

“No no no. That can’t be. Lady Evelyn talks of him like a woman in love and he stares at her like a lovesick pup, not to mention the fact that I found hairpins she wore in the drawer of his bedside table.”

“What were you doing going through my drawers?” Cullen questioned indignantly. That was a strange thing to focus on, but the invasion of his privacy angered Cullen.

He remembered the night the pins were left in his drawer. Josephine took Mia and Branson out to see a play, and so Evelyn and Alistair took the opportunity to come to Cullen. In the morning Cullen swept the pins into the drawer, intending to give them back to Evelyn at some later date. His servants would never snoop, so he didn’t worry about that, but it looked like his sister had no such scruples.

“I was only looking for that book you mentioned,” Mia responded, not meeting his eye.

“I have bookshelves, Mia - you didn’t think to look there?” Cullen shot back. That was besides the point, but he couldn’t let go.

“Alright! So maybe I was looking through your things to prove to myself that I was only being paranoid. Which I wasn’t! Cullen, it’s not too late - you can fix this.”


“Oh yes, Branson, any woman could have the exact pearl and sapphire pins Lady Evelyn owns! Don’t be a fool.”

Cullen had only a second to think of the fact that his brother could believe that Cullen would be the king’s lover and also invite some woman into his bed. It was the truth, and yet Branson could not imagine the actual circumstances, and thought of his brother as a double cheater.

“I don’t understand it then!” Branson threw his hands up in the air. “I once got up in the night and heard voices in Cullen’s bedchamber. He was there with the king - they were talking in low voices, laughing, and then…” Branson swallowed.

Cullen knew what was coming, and for a moment contemplated hiding under the desk. That was just the previous night. Alistair came down to tell him about how Leliana threw him out of Evelyn’s chambers that day because there were some adjustments being made to her gown. They proceeded to speculate on the gown and how they were going to get it off, and ended up having to relieve some excitement that subject elicited.

“They were kissing. I stopped listening after that,” Branson said at last. Cullen breathed a deep sigh of relief. Thank the Maker for small mercies. At least his brother didn’t hear anything worse. “That was all the confirmation I needed. Before I thought the king was very fond of Cullen, but this…”

Cullen’s relief was very short lived. His brother would surely think him some terrible deviant. Oh Maker, he was going to lose him. And Mia as well. Why did he agree to invite them? Why wasn’t he more careful?

“Are you sure they were kissing?” Mia demanded, oblivious to Cullen’s plight.

“I think I know how kissing sounds, thank you very much!”

Mia seemed to ponder that for a moment, before exploding again.
“That is insane! Cullen, you are insane! How did this even happen? How do you expect to sustain it? They’re going to find out about one-another sooner rather than later, and then what?! You have to leave, let them try and work things out together, for the good of the kingdom.” She nodded her head emphatically. “They are tremendous actors, the two of them - they look like they love each other so much. Perhaps that means they could be…”

“I have to agree with Mia,” Branson said. “This is even worse than I thought. You must leave them, Cullen. This will only end in tears.”

Cullen finally felt like he snapped out of his terrified stupor. Laughter came unbidden, and soon he was laughing almost maniacally. This was a complete and utter disaster, and yet there was something darkly humorous in how close and far from the truth they were at the same time.

“This is no time for laughter,” Mia admonished.

“Get a grip, Cullen,” Branson added.

“This is a terrible thing you did, but you can make it right,” his sister continued when Cullen managed to restrain himself. “You can leave with us. You’ll help us run the farm, every day you’ll pray to the Maker for forgiveness, and some day he will absolve you of your sins. Give yourself and them that chance.”

Those words gave Cullen pause.

“You’d take me? You’d allow me to live with you?” he asked in disbelief.

“Of course,” Branson responded without hesitation. “You’re a sinner and a fool, but we love you. We’ll help you set this right as best we can.”

“You’d accept me, even knowing… knowing that I laid with a man?” The last part was nothing more than a whisper, and yet it echoed loudly in Cullen’s mind.

“That’s the least of it.” Mia shrugged. “I wouldn’t care if you were to live with a man, but this is not just any man. This is the king, who is soon to be married.”

Cullen gaped at her stupidly. This was almost as surprising as the rest of the afternoon’s revelations.

“Don’t be so shocked.” Branson rolled his eyes. “I know how many people view such unions, but we’re not so close-minded, even if we live in a tiny village in the middle of nowhere. Do you remember Gregor the smith and Elias the butcher? They lived together. They could afford separate houses, but they stayed in that old one at the edge of the forest. They were not just friends. Mother and father had a distaste for them, as did many others, but they were far too useful to be shunned. When you were leaving for training we were all too young to understand it. You probably never thought of them again, but Mia and I grew up there, hearing the rumors surrounding them, and finally we were mature enough to put two and two together. They were always kind and helpful, and I never agreed with our parents - Gregor and Elias never hurt anyone and what they did behind closed doors was their business. What anyone does in private is his or her business.”

Cullen could only nod. He remembered the two men. Branson was mistaken - Cullen did know there was something odd about them. It was true he was too young to fully comprehend it then, but he understood that two men couldn’t live together, couldn’t be too close, that it was wrong.

“That is not important now,” Mia said, reminding Cullen of his current predicament. “What are you going to do, Cullen? Tell me you agree with us, I beg of you.”
Cullen knew he couldn’t do that. Things couldn’t get any worse, so…

“Let’s go,” he said, feeling determined.

He managed to push himself from the desk and stride to the doors.

“Where are we going?” Branson question, following him.

“I hope you’re not planning anything stupid,” Mia muttered.

“Everything will make sense soon,” Cullen responded.

He ignored his sibling’s annoyed huffing, as he walked quickly through the palace, heading for the large chamber which became the wedding planning headquarters. His heart was hammering wildly in his chest and his stomach was in knots. He was not looking forward to this, but he was out of options at this point.

“We need the room,” he announced once inside.

Leliana and Josephine looked at him questioningly, while the servants were already quickly leaving.

“Is everything alright?” Evelyn asked when they were alone.

“It’s nothing, Lady Evelyn,” Branson said, his voice strained.

Cullen didn’t pay him any heed as he moved towards Evelyn and Alistair.

“Cullen, don’t do anything rash,” Mia implored. “We can…”

She stopped when Cullen stood between his lovers and took their hands. They both looked at him in confusion, knowing his stance on letting his siblings in on their secret, but squeezed his hands.

“You… you know about each other?” Branson blurted out.

“Know about…?” Alistair sounded at a loss for words.

“They thought I was having affairs with both of you behind the other’s back,” Cullen explained.

“Affairs?” Evelyn laughed.

“I’m so confused.” Mia rubbed her temples.

“There are no secret affairs. We have only honorable intentions towards your brother,” Alistair told them, amusement in his voice.

“We love him,” Evelyn added. “Together.”

For some reason that sounded more explicit than Cullen would’ve like it to.

“So, at the same time?” Branson asked, before Mia elbowed him hard in the ribs.

“That is out of line,” she hissed. “The three of you are… in a relationship… together, Lady Evelyn?”

“Yes, Mia, we are. We’re all in love. Your brother is happy with us. We’ll do everything in our power for him to remain so.”

Cullen still felt panic, but at the same time he was stronger, supported by the people he loved,
touched by their words, impressed by how quickly they adjusted to the situation he threw them in. “I… I need to sit down,” Mia muttered.

Branson lead her to a couch and sat down next to her.

Cullen realized he still held Alistair and Evelyn’s hands’, squeezing them too tight in his nerves, so he let go, and immediately missed the contact. Maker, he was a mess. Before he was having a relatively peaceful afternoon and now he was sharing his deepest secrets with his siblings, risking their scorn. That turn of events was more than unexpected and entirely terrifying.

“I’m not leaving them,” he said firmly, needing to be absolutely clear now that things were coming out into the open, even if it was scaring him near to death.

His siblings appeared completely dumbfounded.

“This is a lot to take in,” Mia mumbled.

“It’s not as bad as what we initially thought,” Branson said.

“At first Mia thought I was having an affair with you, Evelyn, and Branson thought I was having an affair with you, Alistair. Then they merged the two ideas,” Cullen again explained for his lovers’ benefit.

“And they couldn’t imagine the three of us together?” Alistair scrunched his brows in confusion. “We’re not liars and cheats, the three of us.”

“Apologies, your highness,” Mia rushed to say. “I didn’t mean to imply… I only… Apologies.”

“Apologies,” Branson echoed.

“That’s alright,” Evelyn assured. “I know that it’s all very unconventional, but we truly love each other. This works.”

“Begging your pardon, Lady Evelyn, but this is dangerous, for you more than Cullen. And it’s not…”

Not normal? Not right? Not what the Maker intended? Cullen feared to imagine what his sister wanted to say before she cut herself off.

“Love is… complicated,” Evelyn said, “but so very worth it.”

“We know what would happen if we were discovered, but not doing this is not an option. We love him, we’re not compete with him - he’s a part of us. There is no us without him,” Alistair added.

“And you love them, Cullen?” Barnson inquired.

“More than anything,” Cullen responded without hesitation. “I was very confused at first, like you must be now, but I’m at peace. They’re the best people I’ve ever met. I feel blessed to have their love. They helped me so much, they’ve made me so happy. I can’t imagine being parted from them.”

“And you never will be,” Evelyn stated with perfect certainty, taking his hand. Alistair nodded, doing the same.

“I can’t say I understand that, but maybe I don’t have to,” Branson said slowly, looking at them. “You are happier than I ever saw you, Cullen. The Maker can’t condemn honest love.”
“It is honest love that we share,” Alistair assured. “When I proposed, I asked them both to marry me. Cullen will be as much a part of this marriage as either me or Evelyn.”

Cullen watched Mia’s eyebrows go up.

“I… This… I can see you care for each other, but… But this is so strange and risky and… mad, beggin your pardon, your…”

“It’s Alistair.”

“I…”

“I’m marrying your brother, you now this now, so there’s no point standing on ceremony,” Alistair said with a smile.

“I’ll have to get used to all this… Alistair.” It sounded like saying the name caused Mia some difficulties. “I need to be alone with my thoughts for a while.” She got up quickly, followed by Branson, and curtsied.

“This went… not terribly?” Alistair offered.

“I think they will both come around,” Evelyn assured.

“Maker, now I need to sit,” Cullen said, moving to the couch his siblings vacated, and plopping down gracelessly. He was absolutely exhausted from all the nerves. It sounded like Mia and Branson didn’t completely condemn him, Branson taking it better than Mia, so perhaps things could be salvageable. Maybe they wouldn’t want to cut ties with him. They were ready to take him back home when they thought he was an adulterous liar, so there was a chance they could come to terms with him having a very odd, yet honest relationship.

“It will be fine,” Evelyn told him, her tone brooking no argument. She stood behind the sofa’s back and started rubbing Cullen’s shoulders. Gratefully he rested his head against her stomach, letting her hands wok on his tense muscles.

“You need a drink,” Alistair insisted, walking to a sideboard and uncorking a bottle. “How did they even figure anything out?” he wondered, pouring a glass.

“They were nosy,” Cullen muttered. “Can we not speak of it now? Tell me about wedding planning, please, I need a distraction.”

“Certainly.” Alistair passed him the glass, which Cullen took eagerly. “You cut short a very lively discussion about ice sculptures…”

Cullen drank his wine and relaxed, listening to Alistair and Evelyn’s trials. When at last a servant knocked, asking if they could resume, since lady Josephine was rather anxious, Cullen decided to get back to his office. His lovers insisted they could put things off and stay with him, but he knew they needed to end what they started. The wedding was days away. He had his own work, which he needed to finish, and that was going to keep him distracted for a while.

It was fully dark when he was returning to his chambers. He feared what he was going to find there. Were his siblings going to be there still? And if they were would they set upon him, trying to convince him to give up what he had with Alistair and Evelyn?

To his surprise they were waiting for him with dinner and wine. They insisted he tell them everything, from the very start, which wasn’t a particularly enticing prospect for Cullen. Those were
his siblings, but he never found it easy to open up to people about his inner struggles or feelings. He never told them details of what happened in Kinloch Hold or Kirkwall, nor did he explain in depth about his lyrium addiction - they knew the barest minimum about the trials he endured as a templar.

What he was expected to tell them now was not painful, but rather intimate and somewhat embarrassing. That afternoon’s revelations exhausted him enough, but he knew he couldn’t refuse. The fact that his siblings wanted to hear more about his relationship was a positive sign and he couldn’t squander their good will.

And so he pushed himself to speak freely and honestly. Mia and Branson asked questions here and there, born out of curiosity and not the desire to criticise, and he responded as best he could.

To his utter surprise, when he was done Mia embraced him, while Branson patted him on the shoulder.

“I still don’t think that starting this was a good idea, but it’s too late to change that. You are happy and you make the king and future queen happy - that’s not something to scoff at. I wouldn’t take that away from either of you. Just be careful. Very careful. Will you promise me you’ll be careful?” Mia insisted.

“Of course. We are more than careful,” Cullen assured her. “Does that mean you won’t disown me?”

From the start he wished fervently that his siblings weren’t going to abandon him, but in that moment it truly looked like his hope was going to be justified.

“We’d never do that!” Branson sounded indignant. “Even if you act like an idiot you’re our idiot.”

“We’ll be there for you. We would’ve been there for you before, if you bothered to write to us.” Mia looked at him pointedly.

“Maker, you have no idea how much than means to me.”

Relief washed over him like a tidal wave. Perhaps his siblings weren’t as enthusiastic as Maxwell, but they accepted him and his choices. He wasn’t losing his old family.

“We judged you too harshly, thinking you could betray the people you care for so much, and you judge us the same way, imagining we’d abandon you because of the way you live your life. We’ve been apart for so long, we hardly know each other anymore. But we can fix that. I want us to,” Mia offered.

“I’d like that as well.” Cullen smiled.

“Are we going to be part of the royal family now?” Branson asked, probably needing to add some levity to the conversation.

“Not officially, but as far as Alistair and Evelyn are concerned, you definitely are.”

“Good to know.” Branson grinned. “Now if you don’t mind this secret royal will go to sleep.”

That night Cullen fell into bed tired but calm. It felt like after years of things always turning out the worst way they could for him, he was finally experiencing the exact opposite - everything that could go wrong ended up going right. Perhaps Branson’s coin was working at last.

Chapter End Notes
This was another installment in my ongoing series "all the awkward situations I can put Cullen in". I have no idea why, but I really love doing that to him. It felt vaguely sitcom-ish to me with all the misunderstandings, and I hope that it's not a negative.

Next chapter is the wedding (unless that hen night I started writing for Evelyn gets out of control and has to be a chapter all on its own). Maybe I'll manage to post it this year, but with my track record I'm not making any promises.

If you enjoy the story leave kudos or a comment or maybe shout it out into the dark sky on a cloudless night of the full moon - whatever works for you.
"When I thought of getting married I never imagined I’d be having two hen nights before my wedding, to two men, but still the strangest part is that the Divine is a part of all those proceedings,” Evelyn said, raising her glass to Cassandra.

“I’m not the Divine now,” Cassandra protested. “See? No stupid hat.” She indicated her short dark hair, free from the absurd headwear she was forced to wear while performing her official duties.

“You should get rid of it altogether,” Isabela insisted. “You have the power to change things - take advantage of it. Perhaps add a slit at the side of the robes, lower the neckline.” The pirate winked at Cassandra before taking a drink of her wine. Cassandra sighed, but then also drank, covering the small smile that was forming on her face.

“I think new robes would not be a bad choice. Perhaps without the slit and cleavage, but I have some ideas,” Leliana told them. There was an unmistakable twinkle in her eye, which meant that she either figured out how to murder someone or was picturing a particularly lovely dress.

“I’d definitely take off the hat. Maybe try a belt?” Josephine suggested.

“A belt wouldn’t be bad,” Cassandra mused. “A sword belt.”

“I’ll drink to that.” Isabela lifted her glass.

“You’ll drink to anything,” Leliana told her with a laugh.

“And I make it look so good.” Isabela grinned. “Mia, you seem awfully quiet.”

“If Evelyn is surprised to have the Divine here, then you can’t imagine what I’m feeling,” Mia responded, smiling a bit nervously.

She was not completely at ease, to be sure, but at least she was using her given name, and Evelyn was glad for that. More than anything she wanted Cullen’s siblings to have a good time, and feel welcome and included. They were a part of her family now. She couldn’t invite Mia to the official hen night, which took place that afternoon, so she made sure to get her to come to the unofficial one in the evening.

“But I’m not the Divine,” Cassandra assured her. “Now we’re all just friends of the bride-to-be.”

Evelyn very much appreciated how all the other women tried to make Mia comfortable. At first she was clearly intimidated by them, but as they chatted easily and drank wine, lounging in Evelyn’s sitting room, she started to relax a bit.

“I’m trying to get used to the idea. I feel like I’ve been saying that a lot lately,” Mia told them, and sipped her drink.

“You must’ve had quite the shock.” Josephine looked at her sympathetically.

“I did. Didn’t you?”

Isabela, Leliana and Josephine all shook their heads, while Cassandra nodded.
“I was a bit scandalized at first, but I can say with complete honesty that now I fully support them.”

“I’m glad I’m not the only one. I support anything that makes my brother happy, yet this… Oh, but this is no time for me to go on about the negatives. We have to celebrate! So if you’ll allow me,” Mia lifted her glass, “I’d like to make a toast.” All the other women also raised their glasses. “To Evelyn, my future sister in law, for saving the world and making my brother smile. May she always be safe, happy and loved.”

“Here here!” Josephine, Leliana, Isabela and Cassandra echoed.

“That was truly touching, thank you Mia,” Evelyn said. She felt a small lump in her throat. She wasn’t sure if it was the impending wedding or the wine but she was very emotional. She raised up quickly and went to embrace Mia, who for once didn’t go stiff, and actually wrapped her arms around Evelyn. “I am so glad we’re doing this. It’s so much nicer than my first hen night,” Evelyn added, returning to her seat.

“Was it very boring? Recap for those of us who were not there,” Isabela prompted.

The guest list was rather restrictive, and so neither Isabela nor Mia or Sera made the cut. None of them seemed to mind, which made Evelyn feel better. Sera was invited to the unofficial gathering, but declined, claiming she had some business to attend to in the city at night. The business either involved some pretty girl or a Red Jenny intrigue, and Evelyn wished Sera all the best with either. Or possibly both.

Vivienne was present for the first hen night, charming everyone and looking very pleased indeed, but politely declined the evening invitation, claiming she needed her rest. Evelyn was rather glad of that - the evening wouldn’t have been as relaxed and informal with the First Enchantress there.

“No offense to you, Josie and Leliana, but it was rather boring,” Evelyn confessed.

“None taken.” Leliana shrugged. “It served its purpose, and that purpose wasn’t to entertain you.”

“That was made abundantly clear. I’ve attended a few of those for my cousins and friends before, and they are never what I would call particularly entertaining. I think the only ones enjoying them are the matrons. My mother was certainly contented.” Evelyn made a face and took a long swallow of her wine. “She is so pleased she can lord my new position over everyone. I don’t think she was as proud of me when I saved the world as she is now that I’m marrying a king.”

“She knows you’re happy and that makes her happy in turn,” Josephine insisted.

“That’s part of it, I won’t deny,” Evelyn conceded, “but it’s mostly about me becoming the queen. I love her, I do, but I’m not blind to her flaws - she always liked feeling superior to others, and now I gave her a pass for a lifetime of condescending smiles. I’m sure she’ll be insufferable at parties. ‘Your daughter is marrying a duke? That’s so sweet! My daughter, you know, the queen, just sent me the nicest letter…’”

“I take it she doesn’t know everything,” Isabela commented.

“Oh Maker, no! She’d faint, then cry, then faint again and start crying while still unconscious. It’d go similarly with my father and siblings. They’re very devout, you know. Very involved with the chantry.”

“Perhaps they’d come around, like I did,” Mia suggested.

“I can’t discount that possibility, but that’d certainly upset them and ruin the pretty fantasy they’re
living. It’s better for them that way. Do you think it would’ve been better for you not to know, Mia?” Evelyn asked. It wasn’t her fault Mia found out, not entirely (she should’ve remembered those hair pins, but most importantly she should’ve been more restrained while talking to Mia, not acting like a woman in love), but she felt somewhat guilty.

“I… I don’t thinks so,” Mia responded after a moment. “For one, I was snooping and asking questions. I shouldn’t have done so if I wasn’t prepared for any possible outcome, so that is entirely my own fault. But besides that, if I didn’t know, I’d surely pester Cullen about marrying. I’d imagine him unhappy and alone, focused only on his duty. Now I know he is loved, and there is some peace in that. Even if I will worry about you being found out.”

“They won’t be found out,” Leliana declared sternly, sounding a bit offended.

“Leliana and her people take good care of us,” Evelyn assured. “She was instrumental in our fight against Corypheus. If she can help defeat an ancient evil, this will be a piece of cake for her.”

Leliana inclined her head to Evelyn and sipped her wine.

“Speaking of cake - was there any at your first hen night?” Isabela asked. For once the pirate queen was very tactful, changing the subject to something neutral.

“Oh yes. Plenty of it. Very convenient. I could stuff my mouth in order to not have to respond when old ladies told me not to fear the marriage bed.”

Isabela guffawed loudly, almost spilling her wine.

“Imagine what they’d do if they knew what was already happening in the royal bedchamber,” she said, wiping her eyes.

From the corner of her eye, Evelyn saw Mia shifting in her seat.

“We won’t be talking of that, worry not,” she told her.

“Good, that’s good. I wouldn’t want to imagine my brother in such situations regardless of circumstances. And to think of my king and queen in… in the act, would be practically treason.”

“I’ll be imagining for the two of us then. In detail.” Isabela winked at Evelyn, causing her to blush slightly. That woman was a shameless flirt, but Evelyn would be lying if she said she didn’t enjoy it.

“I liked seeing some of my old friends,” Evelyn said, trying to change the subject again. “Not all of them could travel here, and I didn’t have much time to speak to those who did, since I had to entertain my future subjects, but it was still nice. We’ve drifted apart after I left for the Conclave all those years ago. I didn’t have time for proper correspondence with them, and I certainly can’t tell them my secrets now, but we share a history and reminiscing was pleasant. A few of them are still unmarried - maybe I could find them husbands here and keep them by my side…”

“That can be arranged,” Josephine chimed in. “I can compose a list of eligible bachelors.”

“I was only joking. Mostly. But a list can’t hurt. I’ll have to pick some ladies in waiting, and that’s a rather daunting prospect. I haven’t truly connected with any of the noblewomen here. I’m sure some of them are perfectly nice women, but they mostly see me as a means to an end, not a person. I suppose I should’ve gotten used to that as the Inquisitor, but back then my relationships with other nobles were about the give and take, a favor for a favor, and no-one expected anything more. Now I’m to have those women in my life on a daily basis, and it’s so very different. Perhaps it’s silly of me to complain…”
“No no no. That’s anything but silly,” Cassandra said, cutting her off. “I’ve had the same issues after becoming the Divine. I needed to surround myself with competent and knowledgeable women, who’d also be devout and compassionate, instead of power-hungry and cynical. I also wanted to be able to have some kind of conversation with them that didn’t necessarily relate to the Chantry.”

“And how did you manage it?” Evelyn inquired, sitting a bit straighter, eager for the answer.

“Leliana helped.” Cassandra saluted the other woman, who smiled slightly. “The rest was a matter of compromise - I couldn’t upset the balance of power completely, so for every new, inexperienced but promising young sister I employed, I kept two older ones who already have some influence.”

Evelyn nodded. She wasn’t sure when her hen night turned into a strategy session, but was willing to take any advice at any time.

“My people found out a few things,” Leliana said.

“And I also made my inquiries,” Josephine added.

“We thought to discuss it with you after the wedding, but now that we’re on the subject, we have some interesting candidates for you to consider,” Leliana continued. “Lady Joanna is on the older side, a very well respected widow, but most importantly almost completely deaf. She can read lips, so conversing with her isn’t much of a problem, but if she were behind closed doors she certainly wouldn’t hear any… suspect sounds. She’d be good to have close.”

“Lady Luisa is married to a bann who was a staunch supporter of Loghain,” Josephine informed. “Taking her on would make it look like you forgive old grievances and are open to listening to those who do don’t often agree with you. Beyond that she has a strong affinity for cards, but not much of a talent for them. Her debts are substantial and could be easily purchased.”

“Then we have Lady Patricia,” Leliana interjected. “She’s a wise woman, with a large host of men. She’s married her fourth husband recently. The previous three had some… unfortunate accidents. Nothing can be proven, except for the purchase of a certain toxin made by her personal maid. That’s a last resort, but she could be reminded of that fact.”

“Lady Antonia has excellent relations with merchant guilds across Ferelden,” Josephine offered. “She used to run the affairs of her father, the ban of Portsmouth. Her husband, the ban of Waking Sea didn’t want her help, so in her boredom she’s found other ways of occupying herself, mostly with the groom. I’m sure she wouldn’t want that to be made public knowledge.”

“You’ll need some unmarried young ladies as well,” Leliana said. “Lady Gwendolyn is not from a particularly powerful family, but is extremely well connected in the Chantry. Being pious, she doesn’t have any skeletons in her closet, but she’s very naive. She’s also a lover of the arts, so a few charming Antivan tapestries or Tevinter sculptures would surely help gain her favor.”

“And finally Lady Florence and Lady Tamar,” Josephine concluded. “Lady Florence is the daughter of the arl of West Hills, a favorite of her older brother who will soon succeed their ailing father. She doesn’t care for the company of men and would not wish to be married off, despite her parents’ ever increasing insistence, preferring instead to continue her close relationship with Lady Tamar, the cousin of the bann of Oswin. They’d certainly be grateful to a queen who’d allow them to remain together. Their influence would be limited, but not non-existent. I’d mostly recommend them because they’re both very witty, well read and musical - they both sing beautifully and play several instruments. Also, at times I can be a hopeless romantic.”

“I needn't have worried.” Evelyn laughed. That was for once shockingly easy. “You already have
this thing figured out. What will I ever do without you? Josephine, must you go back to Antiva?”

“I fear I do,” Josephine responded with a sad smile. “Believe me, I’d love to stay with you, but my family needs me. I’ve been away for too long. You’ve met my sister - she’s no good at running business affairs, and believe me, the rest of my siblings are no better.”

“I do understand.” Evelyn nodded. “Cassandra, must you take Leliana away from me?”

“We don’t always see eye to eye, Leliana and I, but I do need her,” Cassandra responded. “I was incredibly grateful when she told me she wished to help me.”

“I feel that my place is in the Chantry,” Leliana explained. “This is where my heart is, this is where I can do the most good. You’re keeping quite a few of my people - I trained them well, and they’re very loyal to you - they’ll serve you well. Not to mention that Zevran is very eager to help out.”

“Veeeeeery eager.” Isabela grinned. “I’m almost jealous of you.”

“He flirts with everyone.” Evelyn waved her hand dismissively.

“He even flirted with me,” Mia chimed in.

“And why wouldn’t he? You’re a very beautiful woman,” Isabela told her. “Your whole family is very attractive. As is yours, Evelyn. I certainly wouldn’t mind getting to know Maxwell and Branson better.”

“Isabela!” Evelyn and Mia shouted almost simultaneously.

“What?” The pirate looked at them in feigned confusion.

“Branson’s married,” Mia said sternly.

“Maxwell is free to do as he likes, but please don’t let me hear about it if anything happens between the two of you.”

“I’m glad my brothers aren’t here,” Josephine commented.

“And I’m glad I don’t have brothers,” Leliana said.

“Prudes, the lot of you,” Isabela told them, sounding rather amused.

“Can we get back to more… wholesome subjects?” Cassandra asked. “How did you survive wedding planning, Evelyn?”

“Barely.” Evelyn took a large gulp of her wine, draining the glass. She got up to refill it, and topped off her friends. “I knew it wasn’t going to be easy, but Maker, this went beyond my wildest imaginings. I helped some friends and cousins back in Ostwick, but now I know I only had a hand in the most pleasant parts - advising on the dress, trying various cakes, commenting on flower arrangements or music. This… this was all this combined but with a million little annoyances. Who should sit where? How many roasts do we need? How to replace the flowers which can’t be imported? Which guests should be invited to spend the night in the palace and which ones should be made to find their own lodgings? Do we really need ice sculptures?”

“You very much do,” Josephine insisted. “It’s the new thing, and people would comment if you didn’t have them.”

Evelyn felt like rolling her eyes but stopped herself. Josephine only wanted what was best, and she
should be grateful to her, instead of dismissing her knowledge of what was appropriate.

“I could see how happy Cullen was to be as far away from all of that as possible. I did try to ask his opinion on silverware or what color ribbons he liked best, but he…” She laughed, remembering what happened to the previously innocent sample ribbons.

“No continue. What did he do?” Isabela prompted, grinning wickedly. “I expect the ribbons were involved, but I’d like some details.”

“We chose the blue ones,” Evelyn responded coily.

“Cerulean,” Leliana muttered under her breath.

Isabela sighed and wagged her finger, either at Evelyn for refusing to continue with her story or Leliana, who was a stickler when it came to colour names.

“Anyway…” Evelyn continued, “Alistair was rather amazing. He didn’t complain. At least not more than could be expected under the circumstances,” she added, after Leliana made a face.

“He did complain less than you did. And I say that with nothing but love,” Josephine interjected.

“I suppose.” Evelyn shrugged. She did get exasperated quite a few times, muttering ‘what does it even matter?’ angrily when a small and seemingly insignificant detail was causing them trouble. “It was a lot of work, but without the support of my wonderful husband-to-be and my brilliant friends it would’ve been impossible. I know how much effort you’ve put into this wedding,” she said, turning to Leliana and Josephine. “You are just the greatest.” She felt tears welling in her eyes again. “I’m sorry if I was difficult, I…”

They didn’t let her finish, both of her friends coming to her and embracing her.

“It was a pleasure,” Josephine said, patting her hair.

“And a beautiful challenge,” Leliana added.

“Thank you.” Evelyn sniffed slightly, stopping herself from crying, hugging her friends back.

“Don’t I get a hug?” Isabela asked after they parted.

“Only a hug. I’ll be a married woman soon,” Evelyn responded, smirking at the pirate.

“I’ll try and be good,” Isabela promised, reaching out to Evelyn. “But I’m one letter away if you change your mind,” she whispered against her ear.

“Shameless flirt,” Evelyn muttered, blushing, when the pirate let go.

“I’m a woman of my word.” Isabela winked.

“Cassandra? Would you mind if I embraced you?” Evelyn asked. “Everyone’s getting hugged, so…” She opened her arms.

“I suppose I won’t mind,” Cassandra responded, smiling slightly, allowing Evelyn to enfold her in a hug.

“You are all incredible and I’m so honored and pleased to be able to call you friends,” Evelyn said, looking at the gathered women, who smiled back at her. “Your health.” She lifted her glass and drank. “I think we should have more wine. I’m sure Maxwell is getting everyone incredibly drunk
and I won’t be outdone.”

“Is this wise?” Cassandra asked tentatively.

“A hen night only comes once in a lifetime. Let’s drink,” Mia said.

Evelyn beamed at her. She was at last coming out of her shell.

“That’s my sister!” She sauntered over to Mia and poured her more wine while patting her shoulder proudly.

They drank more, laughed more and even sang a bit, Isabela leading them in some downright filthy songs. At some point Mia and the pirate teamed up to insist that Evelyn should show them her wedding dress, to which, despite all the wine she’s had, Leliana was vehemently opposed. She didn’t spend so much time on the dress for them to get it wrinkled and stained with wine, she insisted. Evelyn had to agree with her. The dress was a masterpiece and nothing could happen to it before she wore it. They’ve spent dozens of hours poring over the designs, picking fabrics and gems, and she’s been stuck with a pin more than a few times as the dress was being fitted on her, but she couldn’t regret any of it - the dress was pure perfection.

She couldn’t tell what time it was when a knock on her doors, followed by laughter and shushing, startled them.

“Who could that be?” Evelyn wondered, getting to her feet a bit unsteadily.

“Guess!” two voices shouted.

“Alistair? Cullen?” she asked, incredulous.

“I tried to stop them,” came Maxwell’s voice.

“We all did.” “So did I.” “Me too.” She could hear Dorian, Bull, Zevran, Varric and Branson insist, their voices mingling.

“We miss you!” Cullen called out.

“I miss you too!” Evelyn called back, getting to the doors.

“No no no.” Leliana stood in her way. “You’re not opening those doors.”

“That’s a silly superstition…” Evelyn whined.

“It’s there for a reason,” Mia insisted, moving to stand next to Leliana, their backs to the door now.

“I’m with them,” Josephine said, striding to Leliana’s left.

“We’re also restraining them,” Dorian called out. “I thought if I ever did that I’d be more fun than this.”

“Nothing bad will happen if we talk a bit. Preferably in private...” Alistair protested.

“Oh no, sir. You’re not ‘talking’;” Varric cut him off, the air quotes very clear in his voice.

“But I dnt hunghh…” This time Cullen started to say something, then trailed off, muttering incomprehensibly.
“I have my hand on his mouth,” Branson informed them.

“Good job, Branson,” Mia called out to him proudly.

“I won’t win with you, will I?” Evelyn asked.

“I wouldn’t mind restraining you,” Isabela murmured from behind Evelyn, lightly grabbing her wrists.

“That won’t be necessary,” Evelyn assured her, despite not trying to get free of the pirate’s hold.

“Suit yourself,” Isabela responded, letting go of her.

“I think we should all go to bed,” Cassandra declared. “Separately.”

“Speak for yourself,” Bull boomed.

Cassandra made a disgruntled sound and looked up in exasperation.

“You can say your goodbyes and we’re off,” Maxwell said.

“I love you,” came the two voices Evelyn wanted to hear most.

“I love you too,” she called out to them.

“And I love you ,” Alistair added, making Evelyn confused for a moment. Was he so drunk he was going to repeat that several times over?

“I love you ,” Cullen answered, making Evelyn understand Alistair was speaking to him.

“We’ll have to keep those two veeery far apart,” Varric muttered.

“Should they even be seeing each-other?” Dorian wondered.

“Three people weddings are sooo confuuusing,” Branson mumbled.

That was a good question, but before she could ponder it further Bull called out “We’ll see you tomorrow for the ceremony!”, and there was the sound of retreating footsteps.

“I can’t wait!” Evelyn shouted after them.

“I think it’s best we get you to bed,” Josephine told her gently, steering her to the bedchamber.

“I like that idea,” Isabela agreed, winking.

Evelyn tried to wink back, but ended up just blinking. She was well and truly inebriated. It was a good thing the wedding was set for the afternoon.

“Jst a secnd…” Alistair mumbled into the pillow when Joseph, his personal servant, came in and opened the curtains, letting the blinding light of morning into his bedchamber.

“It’s a beautiful day for a wedding, Your Majesty,” Joseph informed him. “There’s not a cloud in the sky and it’s pleasantly warm.”
Alistair smiled into the pillow, his grogginess dissipating somewhat. A wedding. His wedding. He used to like weddings, being the romantic fool that he was. Then he grew to fear them, expecting to be sooner or later pushed into some politically advantageous yet personally unpleasant union. But that didn’t come to pass. He made his own choice, and what a great choice that was. He was marrying his best friends, the most wonderful people he knew. He was one lucky, lucky man.

“Your potion, Your Highness.” Joseph placed a small glass on his bedside table.

With a yawn, Alistair got into a sitting position, and felt his head ache a bit. Someone forced a vile tasting potion into him before he fell asleep and that certainly helped, but he was not completely free from the effects of a night of drinking.

He downed the new potion quickly, his lips twisting at the tangy taste.

The previous night was a bit of a blur. Maxwell led their small party in celebrating and after the first such experience with him, Alistair was a bit more cautious, but then his other friends started encouraging him to indulge, and he was rather lost. There were constant toasts and he couldn’t not drink to the happiness of his future marriage.

He remembered plenty of laughter and also plenty of cursing during card games. His future husband was truly a sore loser, but then there was even more drinking and things settled down.

Perhaps it should’ve been strange with the bride’s brother and one of the groom’s brothers there, but both Maxwell and Branson were full of good cheer, even if Branson didn’t exactly appreciate jokes about the wedding night which Zevran and Dorian were cracking. Those two working together were an unstoppable force of sexual innuendo.

Alistair couldn’t tell if he or Cullen had the bright idea to visit Evelyn at the end of the night, but any plans they might’ve had were thwarted by all their friends. Which was for the best, now that he thought about it. There was something nice in preserving tradition, even if their relationship was anything but traditional.

“Breakfast is served in your sitting room, Your Highness,” Joseph informed him, taking him out of his thought.

Alistair shuffled towards the appointed room, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

“My lady’s possessions are to be moved here today,” he instructed. That part of tradition he was not going to uphold. He and Evelyn were going to share his chambers and he wanted to make that official right away.

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

The small table in his sitting room was laden with various breakfast foods, and Alistair fell on them like a man starved. The potion and heavy food served to slowly cure his headache. Now all he had to do was dress appropriately and go stand at the dais in the throne room. He had plenty of time.

He was sure Evelyn didn’t have it so easy. Her preparations were certainly going to be more involved. He hasn’t seen the dress, but knew it was large, heavy and complicated to get in. She was probably getting stuffed into a tight corset by two servants while another one worked on her hair and a fourth one painted her face. He shuddered to think of all of it, but that was her choice. She sounded genuinely excited when she spoke of the dress, and who was he to take that away from her? To him, and Cullen as well, she could stand there in a white linen sack and still be perfect, but she seemed to be swept away by Leliana’s ideas, despite her initial restraint.
Having finished his breakfast, Alistair walked to the balcony to see for himself the spectacular weather. It was indeed very pleasant. It was settled that if the weather was good, some of the festivities were going to be moved to the gardens. Now he watched the servants moving tables, chairs and flower arrangements out. Evelyn especially liked the idea of celebrating in open air, and he wouldn’t deny her anything. She was so very concerned, fussing over details, eager to make the day perfect, to start her reign right. Even if she muttered that something was stupid or insignificant, she still continued to search for the best choice, while he was more calm, certain things were going to turn out well regardless of which dinner forks they picked.

One of the few times he put his foot down and argued with Leliana and Josephine was when it came to the commemorative plates. He was opposed to them on principle, and after his experience with the ones from his coronation his determination was only strengthened, since he looked rather terrible on them, his hair far too red, his jaw absurdly square and his smile somehow maniacal. Leliana and Josephine, supported by his own advisers, insisted they had to have them, and so he compromised - there were going to be plates, but only with the date and their names on them, without a portrait. They were going to have to sit for an official portrait some time, which was going to be its’ own special torture, but that was a concern for another day.

“Do you wish to dress, Your Majesty? Afterwards you could go down and mingle with the guests before the ceremony,” Joseph suggested, joining him on the balcony.

Entertaining guests was the last thing Alistair wanted to do, but he knew it was not his choice to make.

“Yes, I’ll do that,” he agreed, moving to his dressing room.

Donning his wedding attire didn’t take him much more time than his normal routine did. Everything was new and felt a bit foreign and stiff on his body, but he didn’t have a corset on, and that was a blessing in and of itself. He adjusts the long cape and surveys himself in the mirror. He definitely looked very royal in various shades of crimson with some gold accents.

Last came his crown. Maker, he was glad he didn’t have to wear that thing every day. It was not exactly comfortable. It was said that no-one should feel comfortable wearing a crown, but to whoever came up with that idea, he just wanted to say that every tedious letter he had to respond to and every bann trying to sway him to his or her opinion reminded him of his power and responsibility daily, so perhaps his headwear didn’t need to do that. He wondered if Evelyn’s crown was as unwieldy. The last person to wear it was Anora, and he had no desire to ask her anything, least of all that. To think that at first it was suggested that he could marry her, since Cousland didn’t wish to do that. Alistair shuddered at the thought.

“Nervous, You Majesty?” Joseph asked, mistaking his involuntary shudder at the memory of Anora for wedding nerves.

“No at all,” Alistair responded with a smile.

And he wasn’t. Some people claimed that marriage was the end of one’s freedom, and for certain people it undoubtedly was, but for him it was quite the opposite. He was at last getting what he wanted most - the people he loved were going to remain at his side from that day on, and he couldn’t be happier. That was his freedom - freedom to see them every day and to kiss them every night.

He had no doubts when it came to them. At least as far as his side of things was concerned. At times he still worried that they were sacrificing too much for him, but he also knew they’d chastise him for such ideas. They loved him and were willing to pay any price to be with him, which was an eternally humbling realization.
“Alright then, You Majesty. Do you wish to see the guests?”

“Wish is a strong word,” Alistair muttered. “But I will,” he added when Joseph slightly quirked a brow at him. He’d never say a words to criticise his king, but Alistair could always read his face, and his restrained yet disapproving expressions were rather amusing.

As he strode to the Great Hall, Alistair noted just how clean every corner of the palace was. The last time the windows and floors shone like that was on the day of his coronation. That was not a joyous occasion. He was resigned then, set on fulfilling his duty, but by no means happy about it. Now he smiled at everything, truly excited for what was to come.

Guests were milling about in the corridors, catching up with old friends or more probably plotting something. He stopped to chat with those he knew, slowly making his way to the throne room. The chamber was filled with fresh flowers, their smell chasing away the usually musty atmosphere. There were also garlands decorating the walls and rows of seats. It did look rather pretty and festive, but not overly solemn, the colors light, whites and blues dominating.

The blues matched Evelyn’s eyes. He realized that during the night when Evelyn decided to involve Cullen in the preparations and asked his opinion on the ribbons. Alistair wasn’t sure if she planned it that way, but soon her wrists were tied above her head, with one thick ribbon covering her eyes. When at last they pulled it off, she blinked up at them, her eyes shining brightly with her satisfaction, their colour like that of the ribbon which had hung on her nose. In that moment he and Cullen agreed that this was the right colour.

“Lovely decorations. And the ribbons - just exquisite!”

Alistair laughed, hearing Cullen’s voice at his side.

“They are, aren’t they?”

“Was it very hard to pick them?”

“Very hard indeed.”

They shared a look and both laughed.

“How are you feeling?” Alistair asked.

“I’m not the one who’ll be standing up on that dais. How are you feeling?”

“I’m feeling great. But you know what I mean - you won’t be on the dais, but…”

“I’ve never been better.” Cullen smiled at him brightly, and Alistair had no doubt it was the truth.

Cullen looked very dashing in his new courtly attire, the rich brown and gold perfectly matching his natural colouring. The jacket fitted him wonderfully, accentuating his broad shoulders and trim waist.

“I feel like you’re undressing me with your eyes. Patience, Your Highness,” Cullen whispered to him, smirking.

“Maker, don’t say such things,” Alistair muttered, feeling a thrill running down his spine. “I’m already eager for this to be over and for the night to come. All this pomp and circumstance is just in the way of the best part of getting married.”

“Let’s hope we’ll be able to extricate the bride from her gown before that night turns into day.”
“Between the two of us we’ll surely succeed.”

“You know we can’t rip or tear anything, don’t you?”

“I do. Still, I believe in us.”

That last comment earned Alistair another broad smile. Maker, how he loved this man.

“I’m looking forward to making you smile like that for the rest of our lives,” he said. “But now I must leave you - I can see Tegan staring daggers into me. I need to entertain.”

“That’s quite alright. You’ll entertain me later.”

Cullen bowed to him respectfully, but his smirk was anything but polite, leaving Alistair blushing, forcing him to wait several moments before joining Tegan and his important guests.

The throne room was slowly filling with people, guests taking their seats. Alistair nodded to his friends, glad to have so many kind faces among the sea of nobles. Leliana and Josephine were still making last moment adjustments and directing the servants since the morning, and so when they appeared in the chamber, he knew they were close to starting the proceedings.

When Divine Victoria, or rather Cassandra, as she insisted he call her, appeared on the dais, Alistair took his position. He felt restless and excited, ready to see his future wife, to hold her hand, to promise to love her forever. Meanwhile he turned to look at his husband-to-be, again a bit sad not to be able to have him there with them, but Cullen only smiled brightly. They looked at each other until the musicians started playing.

Everyone straightened up and turned their heads towards the closed doors, which now started opening slowly. When they fell open fully, he could see the silhouette of Evelyn. As she moved towards him, in time with the music, he could see more details. The first thing which struck him was her overwhelming smile. Her full lips were painted a light pink, so different from her preferred red, but no less beautiful. Her hair was gathered at the back of her head, a few lightly curled strands allowed to frame her face, which wasn’t hidden by a veil. Instead the long veil was pinned under her updo, fluttering down her back and over the train. In her hands Evelyn held a bouquet of white flowers with a few blue ones completing the composition.

Her gown was very large, just like he knew it was going to be, the voluminous skirts falling on each side of the exaggerated hip line, flaring from a tiny waist. An impressively long train trailed behind her. The top part of the gown was more modest than some other dresses he’s seen Evelyn wear, but still it showed a hint of cleavage and displayed her pale collarbones and long throat, as well as her bare arms, the neckline starting at the top of her shoulder and sweeping down in a gentle arch. The entire brilliantly white material of the gown was embroidered with intricate patterns which resembled stars or flowers, he couldn’t tell which, constantly changing his mind as the dress moved, sparkling with hundreds of tiny white stones, punctuated with a few sapphires dotting the neckline.

Despite its size, the gown wasn’t swallowing or overwhelming her. Rather Evelyn was dominating over it, her natural beauty and commanding presence making the dress look like an adornment, instead of the focus of everyone’s attention.

She could see him watching her in wonder and smiled even wider. She only broke that contact to gaze to the side, no doubt trying to catch Cullen’s eye. Alistair was certain their husband was as mesmerised as he was.

At last she reached the dais and walked up the few steps, with Josephine taking her flowers and
Leliana hurrying to adjust the train and veil. A servant could’ve done that, but Leliana doubtless felt the need to take care of her greatest creation personally.

Alistair wanted to say how beautiful Evelyn looked, how happy he was, but couldn’t get the words out, too overwhelmed with emotion.

Cassandra cleared her throat lightly, catching his attention.

Alistair almost didn’t hear her words as she started speaking. She was doubtless saying something about the Maker and Andraste and being joined forever, but all he was focused on was Evelyn, right before him, so close he could reach out and touch her. She looked so perfect, radiating happiness. She was smiling constantly, tiny smiles and full on grins, expressions changing as she watched him. At one point he couldn’t help himself and took her hands in his, squeezing and not letting go as Cassandra continued to drone on. Evelyn squeezed him back, her smile widening.

They both focused again when Cassandra uttered Alistair’s name, followed by his full title, and prompted him to repeat the words of the vow back after her. He’d already learned them by heart, fearing he’d twist them, and now followed the lines dutifully, looking at Evelyn intently as he said each and every word about love and devotion.

When it came her turn, Evelyn repeated the words with the same intensity, her voice loud, clear and joyful, her hands tightly holding his. They only let go when the vows were over and they had to exchange rings. As he felt her small fingers pushing the cold metal on his digit, Alistair knew it was all official. What he dreamed of for so long happened at last.

The moment Cassandra said they could kiss, they were moving towards each other, meeting halfway, their lips pressed together, but only for an appropriately short moment, since scandalising the nobility of their land was not their intention.

The last part of the ceremony was the coronation. Evelyn was solemn as she recited the words of another pledge, this time to serve her new land. She meant every word, Alistair knew. She was as serious about being a good queen as she was being a good wife. She was taking on a great responsibility, again, so soon after freeing herself from the role of the Inquisitor, and she would bear it with grace, doing everything she could for her kingdom.

At last Tegan presented the smaller crown to Alistair, and he gently placed it on Evelyn’s bowed head.

“My wife. My queen,” he whispered reverently.

Evelyn pressed her lips together, looking overcome with emotion.

Even if he tried to say anything more, he’d be drowned out by the thunderous applause from their gathered guests. Almost at the same time Alistair and Evelyn both turned to where Cullen stood, clapping his hands and beaming at them. How Alistair wished to walk down there and embrace him. But there was going to be time enough for that, he reminded himself.

In the meantime he offered his arm to his new wife and led her down the length of the throne room, the cheers around them still near deafening. People started following them as they moved towards the largest dining hall, where long tables were stuffed in several rows before their own high table.

“I know we had to order all this food, but eating it will take an eternity,” Evelyn said, as she took in the various dishes place one next to the other on the tables.

“Are you eager to do something else, my dear?” he asked.
“You could say that,” she responded with a disarming smile.

“Let’s eat quickly, then,” Alistair suggested, pulling the chair out for her. It somehow felt appropriate that their first conversation as man and wife was about food and sex, he decided.

Leliana was by Evelyn’s side in moments helping her settle the cumbersome material, so that she could sit down.

“Any advice on taking this thing of?” Alistair asked his friend.

“Carefully,” was all she said, before scurrying away to help nobles find their places.

They’ve battled over seating arrangements for long. Both he and Evelyn were in agreement that Cullen had to seat at their table, and wouldn’t budge on that issue. They knew he couldn’t be by their side, but they wouldn’t see him at any of the lesser tables. Their most important subjects and representatives of other courts had to be closest to them, but in the end a place was found for Cullen, between some of the less insufferable banns. Now they watched him take it.

“It still feels wrong for him to be so far away,” Evelyn whispered.

“I know, love,” was all Alistair could say.

Soon any intimate talk was out of the question as their honoured guests took their places to their right and left, and they were forced to engage them in conversation.

When the entire hall had filled, Alistair stood up to welcome everyone, thank them for coming and invite them to partake of the food and drink. He himself ate very little, taking small bites between conversations with people coming over to congratulate him. Then the toasts started. All the arls, banns and foreign visitors wished to make public just how much happiness and prosperity they wished the newlywed couple. Alistair took only the smallest sip for each toast, needing to stay sober for the duration of the celebration and what was about to follow it.

The only pleasant breaks in the proceedings were moments when their friends managed to get a word with them. Varric, just like he promised Alistair all those years earlier, was working valiantly on drinking an entire cask of wine to celebrate his wedding, and made a very long toast, angering nobles who wished to take their turn.

Dorian pretended to have some political issues to discuss with them, which required privacy, making other noble guests give them some space. Of course instead of discussing any matter of state, they were gossiping about the other guests.

Even Cassandra took the opportunity to act as if she were giving them a blessing, while in truth she only said “Maker bless you” quickly, and then started talking of books she and Evelyn read and how their wedding was ever so much better than those in the books.

After a large portion of the food was consumed, they proceeded to the ballroom.

“I’m sorry to say that, but this will not be as enjoyable as the masquerade was,” Evelyn whispered to him, when they entered the chamber.

“Nothing can compare to that. But let’s make the best of it. My queen.” He bowed before his wife and swept her into his arms when she took his hand.

The large orchestra was playing something slow and sweet as they glided over the floor, soon joined by other couples, who were luckily giving them a wide berth, since Evelyn’s veil and train were
swiping this way and that, and no-one wanted to step on them.

“I don’t think I told you just how beautiful you look,” Alistair finally said.

“You looked at me with such awe that I knew it without you having to say anything with your words,” Evelyn responded, smirking. “And you are very dashing as well,” she smoothed her hand over the fastening of his cape gently, “but all those clothes will look so much better on the floor of our chamber.”

“If I’m not mistaken, you’ve made the exact same joke during the masked ball,” Alistair observed.

“Are you saying I’m boring?”

“Never! Your jokes are classics, they age like fine wine. They’re better with each repetition.”

“That’s what I thought.” Evelyn gave him a triumphant grin.

“Unfortunately my clothes will remain on my person for hours to come.” Alistair groaned in frustration.

“But it’s something to look forward to as we entertain the guests.”

That Alistair couldn’t disagree with. It was a good thing to keep in mind as he took a turn over the floor with one noble after another.

Luckily, from time to time he found himself dancing with someone he actually liked. Josephine and Leliana took a break from their constant work to give him a bit of a respite, joking and dancing with him. The ever brazen Isabela cut in line, claiming a dance, making the noble ladies patiently waiting their turn gasp in shock and indignation, yet not one of them said anything to her. Isabela truly held herself like a queen and looked positively regal in a rather scandalous dress of red and navy blue, her throat, wrists and ears dripping with gold.

Evelyn was similarly aided by their friends, as well as her brother. Maxwell looked almost as happy as she did, and they glided over the floor easily, constantly laughing. Dorian as the Tevinter ambassador of course had no problems getting a dance and cut quite the dashing figure. Zevran was perhaps the best dancer out of all of them, spinning Evelyn gracefully, as is she wasn’t wearing a huge gown with a long train.

Alistair didn’t know how long they’ve been dancing, when out of the corner of his eye, he spotted Evelyn and Cullen together. He begged for a break and stood with his next partner at the edge of the dancefloor, sipping wine, and watched his spouses dancing together.

Despite his lack of confidence when it came to dancing, Cullen apparently couldn’t resist going out on the floor with his wife on their wedding. They looked achingly beautiful together, his dark clothing in contrast to her perfectly white gown, their smiles visible from across the chamber. They talked and laughed as they danced, and it appeared as if they were in a world of their own, completely separate from the crowd.

For a moment Alistair regretted not being able to dance with Cullen, but then chased away the negative thought. It was enough that Evelyn could do that.

After several more dances Josephine suggested they move the festivities to the gardens, and Alistair took that advice gratefully. The room has grown rather hot and his feet were tired. He thought with sympathy of Evelyn and her no doubt painful shoes.
The gardens were cool and pleasant. There were tables with pastries and wine placed here and there, and Alistair threw himself on them, starved from all the dancing. When he was done, Leliana lead him and Evelyn to a sitting area where appropriately decorated benches were located.

Being able to sit again was a blessing. Evelyn’s sigh of relief was audible. He didn’t have the time to ask after her poor feet before people started gathering around them with gifts. Josephine was cataloguing them carefully, with Cole hovering nearby, enjoying watching the many shiny objects, while they had to say a few words about just how much they loved the uptinth painting or set of vases. Maker, what were they going to do with all that useless stuff?

Their friends of course also brought them presents. Much more thoughtful ones. Some of them could be opened in the gardens, like the set of excellent vintages from Josephine, the exquisitely soft and beautiful quilt for their bed from Leliana or the specially made, matching set of a bow for Evelyn and sword for Alistair, which Cassandra offered, adding in a whisper that another sword has also been made for Cullen.

Other gifts had to be viewed quickly and with discretion, like the first part of Varic’s new series, published under a pseudonym, but with a personal dedication signed with his name or a collection of apparently very scandalous illustrated texts on love and desire from ancient Tevinter which Dorian purchased for them.

And then there were gifts from Bull, Zevran and Isabela. Each of them presented a larger or smaller package and insisted it be only open in the privacy of their chamber. Alistair and Evelyn exchanged a worried glance. Whatever those were was no doubt going to make them blush.

It felt like the parade of gifts was never going to end, but mercifully it did. It was already dark, torches lighting up the garden, and Alistair looked pleadingly at Josephine.

He couldn’t wait anymore. Just like he warned them, Cullen was staying away from them, not wishing to draw attention to their closeness, but Alistair hoped he’d break his steely resolve. That didn’t happen, Cullen as determined in his convictions as ever, which was both admirable and very annoying. If he didn’t at last see him, didn’t touch him, didn’t hear his voice, he’d go mad. Evelyn was surely feeling the same way, her eyes scanning the crowd in search of him.

“Can we?” he asked in his meekest, most desperate voice.

Josephine turned to exchange glances with Leliana who nodded once, causing Alistair to grin.

“Are you ready for another wedding, love?” he asked Evelyn, already getting up.

“Absolutely,” she responded eagerly, taking his hand and getting to her feet.

“We just have to make a little speech, steel ourselves for the inappropriate smiles from people who think they know what we’re about to be doing, and then… then the best part begins.”

Chapter End Notes

New year, new chapter. And I actually have a large chunk of the next one done, so it shouldn't take very long.

I've bookmarked dozens of wedding gowns in the months since I decided to write a
wedding, and picking what exactly I wanted to base Evelyn's gown on was quite the
challenge. If you're curious, this is the gown that inspired me
http://thewritersramblings.tumblr.com/post/164524292931/theartcalledfashion-ziad-
nakad-haute-couture with the exaggerated hips and neckline added from this one
http://couture-constellation.tumblr.com/post/165379941268/couture-constellation-the-
bride-zuhair-murad although Evelyn's dress would have to show a bit less cleavage. I'm
not very good at clothing descriptions, but I hope you were able to picture something a
bit similar as you read. And if not, then now you know what I was going for.

Thank you for taking the time to read (I know the chapters are getting absurdly long),
and as always feel free to leave kudos or comments.
The wedding night

Chapter Notes

It's been a while. More than a while. I promised to finish this chapter much sooner, but real life made a liar of me. The past few months have been very difficult for me. I've had one bad thing after another happening to me, and it was not conducive to writing happy, smutty things, but at last I was in a place to do it. I hope you enjoy it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You don’t look like you’re enjoying yourself, brother,” Mia observed, plopping down next to Cullen on a bench in the garden.

“I’m not fond of large gatherings of nobles,” Cullen responded, shrugging. “Still, as far as those go, this one serves an important purpose. And everything is very beautiful.”

“Especially the bride,” Branson commented, taking a seat on Cullen’s other side.

“And the grooms,” Mia added, patting Cullen’s shoulder.

The way she said ‘grooms’, so easily, so simply, made Cullen smile. Every time his siblings showed him their unconditional love and acceptance, his heart felt like it was about to burst with joy.

They were both right about his husband and wife looking breathtaking. He couldn’t stop looking at them. It was not just the elegant clothing they wore, but rather their internal happiness shining through, that made them so attractive. It could be said that he was just a fool in love, seeing the objects of his affection as perfect, but he’s heard the awed whispers of the other guests. Evelyn’s gown made quite the impact. There was no doubt all girls of marriageable age imagined themselves standing at the altar in a gown like that, with a husband like Alistair.

It hit Cullen all over again how strange and incredible his life was as they both made sure to share a glance with him as they stood on the dais. If they could, they’d pull him there, he knew. He’d be lying if he said that there wasn’t a small pang of jealousy that hit him at the thought of being separate from them in that pivotal moment, but he tried not to dwell on that. They loved him, and that was all that mattered.

When Alistair and Evelyn recited their vows, he repeated them in his mind, swearing to the Maker he’d uphold them as faithfully as they did. He wished he could say the words out loud, that they could hear them, but that was impossible, and in wishing for the impossible lay only sadness, which he didn’t want to feel on this joyous day.

For the rest of the celebration he didn’t have much contact with them, purposely staying away. He’s explained his plan to them beforehand, not wishing for them to worry, and they tried to talk him out of it, but he held firm. If he were to come over, they’d surely ignore all other guests and it would be both rude and dangerous for them. It was difficult, at times near impossible, to distance himself from the people he loved on the day which was supposed to be dedicated to celebrating their love, but he knew he was doing the right thing. His friends understood his motivations, and kept him busy, making the time go just a bit faster.
The only time he broke his rule of no contact was in the ballroom. Despite his lack of skill at dancing, he asked Evelyn for a turn on the floor. The smile she gave him was the perfect reward for his nerves. She complimented him on his looks and his dancing, and chastised him for not spending time with them, to which he quickly responded by saying that he was saving his strength for the night. That drew a laugh and a blush from her, placating her.

After that dance Cullen left for the gardens, rather impatiently waiting for the right time to join them in their chamber.

“Are you enjoying the party?” he asked his siblings.

He spent very little time with them as well during the entire wedding. He was seated in the first row for the ceremony, while they were relegated to the back. At dinner he was at the main table, and his brother and sister were again in a less prestigious location. Alistair and Evelyn were very apologetic, but both Cullen and his siblings couldn’t hold it against them. They were no nobles or dignitaries, so they couldn’t hold places of honor and attract undue attention to their familiarity with the monarchs. It was still a bit scandalous that they were even there.

When he caught sight of them in passing, Mia and Branson were always in the company of friends. Maxwell was incredibly welcoming, delighted to see more people join his family. He and Mia got along well, but he and Branson seemed to become instant friends. Mia, after some initial shyness, enjoyed the company of all of Evelyn’s friends, but especially Isabela. It was something of a surprise to Cullen, but the pirate queen and his sister apparently found some common ground, constantly laughing together.

Mia liked dancing since she was a child, and even if she never learned the steps to courtly dances, she was happily dancing with Zevran, Maxwell, Dorian, Varric and even Bull, who despite his large stature had some skill. It was a pleasure to see her so happy and free, beautiful in another gown which Evelyn had gifted her, the deep green making her look as elegant as any noble lady.

Branson didn’t dance. Just like Cullen, he was wary of that pastime, but enjoyed the food and drink, standing at the edge of the crow in the ballroom, talking with his new friends.

“I never expected I’d like it so much,” Mia confessed.

“Well, I wasn’t the most sought after dance partner, but I like it alright,” Branson responded.

“I wasn’t…” Mia started protesting.

“You danced with two banns,” Branson cut her off.

“Actually three, but that’s hardly…”

Cullen looked at his sister in surprise.

“Not particularly interesting, those nobles,” she said. “I much rather spend time with your friends, but I won’t deny it was amusing watching them try and figure out who I was. But that’s not important now. We’re here to take you away.”

“Take me where?” Cullen asked.

He was waiting to be called away from the party to join his lovers, his spouses, in their chamber, but something told him they had even more planned. He was still not the biggest enthusiast of surprises, but after all they’ve been through, he knew that he was going to enjoy that one, whatever it was.
“You know we can’t tell you,” Mia said with a smirk, getting up to her feet and offering him her hand.

Soon Branson was also up, extending his hand. Cullen laughed, shook his head and took their hands.

“After you.”

They moved from the gardens inside, making their way through throngs of guests to the private wing of the palace, but they weren’t headed towards the royal chambers. Instead they ended up in a rather disused section. His siblings stopped before a set of double doors, from behind which he could hear hushed voices. Branson knocked three times, and the voice went silent, but there was some shuffling of feet.

“Ready?” Mia asked.

“I suppose I have to be,” Cullen responded, feeling excitement with just a hint of worry.

At his tentative agreement, his siblings took hold of the handles, and opened the doors.

What greeted Cullen inside nearly took his breath away. A small, well lit chamber was decorated with dozens of flower vases and garlands, making the air smell heavy and sweet. All his friends stood to the right or left of the doors, facing him, smiling broadly at him, while right before him he saw Alistair and Evelyn, bathed in the warm candlelight, as overwhelmingly beautiful as that afternoon, if not more. They were waiting for him, and so without prompting he took a step forward, and heard his siblings following him and closing the doors.

With each step he took, he felt his own smile grow and saw the same response on Alistair’s and Evelyn’s faces. They did this for him, this small private ceremony. They wanted to vow their love to him out loud, in the presence of witnesses, and his heart leapt with joy.

As he headed towards them, Alistair and Evelyn moved to the side, making a place for him before them. When he was close, they reached out to him, and he took their hands, letting them guide him.

“Hello,” he said, feeling somewhat stupid.

“Hello, love,” Evelyn responded.

“Do you like the surprise?” Alistair asked. “Because if you don’t then we can just…”

“It’s perfect,” Cullen said, cutting him off. “The greatest surprise in the history of surprises.”

“Hopefully we’ll be able to top it later tonight,” Evelyn told him, her smile promising something indecent.

“Are you going to talk sex with all of us here or are you going to get on with it?” Sera called out to them, making all three of them shift nervously.

“I wouldn’t mind some sex talk,” Isabela interjected.

“Neither would I,” Zevran added.

“I’m fine with it,” Bull boomed.

“I can take some notes, if you don’t mind,” Varric chimed in.

Cullen looked around at all his friends, gathered there for him, to support him, to share in his joy, and
it warmed his heart, to know he had so many well meaning people in his life, even if some of them would probably want to quite literally share his join, finding a place in his marriage bed.

“No sex talk,” Cassandra decreed, her voice brooking no argument.

“Spoil-sport,” Dorian muttered.

“No sex talk, then,” Evelyn agreed. “I’m not sure how such things are done, if they are ever done, but we wanted to… needed to do this. That first ceremony was very beautiful, if a bit long, I’m sorry to say Cassandra…”

“If it were up to me I’d marry you in one twentieth of the time it took, but apparently a royal wedding must be long and pompous,” the woman in question responded, shrugging.

“Either way,” Alistair started, “that first ceremony was incomplete. We couldn’t enter into this marriage like that.”

“We wanted to make this official, to have all the people who matter witness it,” Evelyn added. “Chantry vows feel like they don’t exactly fit here, so we’ve prepared a few words of our own. Unless you want to say the vows.”

“I didn’t prepare anything,” Cullen said, “but I think I can manage a few words. I’ve already repeated the Chantry vows in my mind as you said them.”

At his words he heard a few gasps, and turned in time to see Josephine holding her hand over her heart, Cassandra pressing her lips together, trying not to show emotion, and his sister dabbing at the corner of her eye, while Bull griped Dorian’s hand. When he looked back at Alistair and Evelyn, he saw they were touched as well.

“Good. That’s good. Who goes first?” Alistair asked.

“That’s what she…” Isabela started, then hissed. “You didn’t have to elbow me that hard, Leliana.”

“I think I did,” came the calm response. “Begin, Alistair.”

“Thank you for putting me on the spot like that, Leliana.” Alistair chuckled. “Well…” He stopped for a moment. Cullen squeezed his hand, which coaxed a smile from him. “Sometimes I still can’t believe that this is my life - it has been far stranger and more exciting than should be possible. I used to think I wasn’t supposed to be a hero or a king. I was supposed to be a Warden, nothing more and nothing less, and that fate or the Maker played a cruel joke on me, but now I know that it’s not what happened. I was supposed to help save Ferelden and I was supposed to become its king, because it was all leading up to this, to me being with you, right here, right now. This was meant to be. We were meant to be.”

He looked intently at Cullen and then Evelyn.

“You are everything I could’ve hoped for and more. I always longed for love, but it kept eluding me. I almost gave up on it, resigning myself to a solitary existence, but then you came along, and you changed everything. You gave me new hope, new purpose… a new life. You are the best thing that’s ever happened to me. I love you, more than I can express, and I’ll keep loving you for as long as I draw breath. I can’t promise you that everything will be easy, but I can swear on my life and my honor that I’ll do everything in my power to make you happy, to make sure you won’t regret saying yes to me all those months ago in the Winter Palace.”

Cullen felt a small lump forming in his throat, his emotions overwhelming him. He watched Evelyn
“I was in love with you almost since I met you, Cullen,” she begun. “You were the most incredible man I’ve ever met - handsome, loyal, strong, sweet, brave, smart and charming. Even if you don’t think you’re charming,” she added, probably noticing Cullen’s skeptical look, “you are. You charmed me completely. And then I met another man who possessed all those qualities, who swept me off my feet.”

She smiled at Alistair.

“I don’t believe in fate, so I’m not going to attribute it to that, but it must mean something that you only allowed yourself to admit your own feelings when Alistair came into the picture. It was a bit confusing for all of us, those unconventional feelings. For some more that others,” she squeezed Cullen’s hand and smiled, “but now it’s the most natural and obvious thing. You two completely me. We complete each other. We’ve had so many obstacles before us, but we overcame them all. We’ve worked so long for this moment, for this life we’re starting together, and I know it’s going to be incredible. I love you, more than I thought possible. I want to stand between you and the world, to protect you from any harm, to chase away all your sorrows, to always be there by your sides, to support you, to be the reason why you smile. I will let you know each and every day how loved you are, how thankful I am to have you, how in my eyes you are the two most wonderful men in all of Thedas.”

Cullen’s lip was trembling with the force of his feelings. He knew all of that, knew Alistair and Evelyn loved him and each other deeply, but still it touched him so greatly to hear it articulated in such a manner, with such passion and unshaken determination.

He watched Alistair bite his lip, his emotions plain on his face, and then smile at him, gently, encouragingly. This was his turn, his moment to tell those two amazing people just how much they meant to him. He hoped he would be able to express just a fraction of what was in his heart.

“I feel so proud and yet humbled to know that two people like you could love me. But most of all I feel lucky,” he said. “I didn’t make things very easy for you, but you never gave up on me. You were persistent and you broke down all the walls I’ve built for myself.”

He shook his head.

“No. You didn’t break anything. You were always gentle and patient - you never demanded things of me, only gave of yourselves. You offered me choices, allowed me to come to terms with my feelings on my own time. You understand me, you accept me with all my flaws. I never imagined one person could love me like that, and two people… That wouldn’t cross my mind. My upbringing, my training, my experiences - they all worked against me, but you helped me move past that and open myself up to love. This is the happiest day of my life. You’ve made me the happiest man alive. I used to think happiness was beyond my reach, that I should only try to be contented, but you proved me wrong. You kept proving me wrong. I didn’t know I could like being mistaken, but I do.”

He smiled at them in turn.

“I adore you, with every fiber of my being, and I’ll never stop. You are a part of me. I’d say you are my better half, but you showed me that we are all equal, all worthy of each other. I will always strive to be the best possible husband, to love you like you deserve to be loved - this is my promise, from this moment until we are gone, and even after that.”

When he finished, they just stood there, holding hands tightly, smiling. He didn’t know how long
they remained that way until he heard someone clear his throat.

“Rings?” Maxwell proffered a small cushion with three golden bands towards them.

“We took them off before, so that we could do it all properly,” Evelyn explained, probably noticing Cullen looking confusedly at their hands.

Slowly, reluctantly they let go of each other’s hands. Alistair and Evelyn took one of the larger rings together. Cullen felt his hand tremble slightly as he extended it towards them. The cold pressure of the metal on his finger was foreign and yet incredibly comforting. He looked at his own hand, now adorned by the golden band, held by two people he pledged his life to - he liked the sight of that very much, but he was going to like it even more when they also wore the matching rings.

He gently extricated his hand from theirs and reached for the smallest band. Alistair moved with him, their fingers meeting over the metal, and together they placed the ring on Evelyn’s delicate finger.

Finally he and Evelyn took hold of the last ring and slid it on Alistair’s finger, and for a moment they all gazed at their hands, at the matching bands.

“I pronounce you husbands and wife,” Maxwell announced, clearly happy.

“I wanted to say that,” Dorian complained.

“I should’ve said it,” Varric argued.

“I think I should have been the one to…” Leliana begun.

“You are all very wrong. I’m the one to say it,” Cassandra informed them in a steely tone. All other voices quieted, and if anyone else wanted to express their disappointment at not being able to say the words, they kept it to themselves. “You are now married,” Cassandra said.

Without waiting for an encouragement, Alistair and Evelyn leaned in, kissing Cullen’s cheeks, and then quickly enveloped him in a tight embrace, which he returned, his arms trying to enfold them as tightly as possible.

There was loud clapping and cheering from their friends. When they let go of each other, Cullen looked again at all the smiling faces. He wanted to hug each and every one of them, and soon he was afforded the opportunity, as his friends lined up before them to give their congratulations. They allowed his siblings to come first, and Cullen held them long and hard, whispering his thanks. They both looked genuinely glad, Mia even wiping at her eyes.

When everyone had their turn, Varric passed around glasses of wine.

“This is the last glass from that cask you provided for me,” he said. “Just like I promised, I drank the entire thing during your wedding, Alistair. I’m so happy for you. For all of you. I will keep it short now, because I have a feeling you want to get away for a private celebration.” Cullen felt a blush creeping up his cheeks. What Varric said was the truth, and yet he didn’t want his siblings to be reminded of what he was about to be engaged in. “We’ll have plenty of time to talk tomorrow. For now I just want to raise a glass to those three people who deserve to finally be happy after all the nonsense they’ve been through. To Alistair, Evelyn and Cullen, and their marriage.”

“Here here!” all their friends echoed.

They drained their glasses rather quickly, and were readying to leave, but Cullen stopped.
“Thank you. All of you,” he said. “For being my friends, for accepting this, for being a part of it. Don’t take this as an encouragement to make more terrible jokes and innuendos, but I truly appreciate all of you being here.”

He was met with smiles, and for a moment hoped no-one was going to say anything suggestive, but Bull had to dash his hopes.

“You’ll thank me for the other thing tomorrow,” the mercenary said, grinning.

“I’m not asking what it is,” Cullen told him, rather sternly.

“You’ll see soon enough,” Bull responded, still grinning.

“Off with you,” Josephine ordered. “The guards are for the moment on different routes, so you can go safely. Now.”

“Shall we?” Alistair offered them his hands.

“I think we shall.” Evelyn took it, and Cullen followed.

Accompanied by another wave of clapping, they left the chamber. As they rounded a corner, Evelyn stopped them, lifted her dress up and kicked off her shoes, letting out a prolonged sigh of relief.

“Those have been killing me for hours,” she explained.

“You could’ve taken them off after leaving the official party,” Cullen said.

“I wanted to do this properly.”

“No-one could see your feet under that mountain of material,” Alistair told her.

“But I would know. One does not get married with bare feet,” Evelyn insisted.

“I would offer to carry you, but I’m afraid I’d trip over the train,” Cullen joked, looking skeptically at the long swath of material.

“That’s quite alright. I don’t think you’d be able to handle those skirts.” Evelyn took hold of the heavy material and let it fall from her grasp, the many layers fluttering.

“It may be too much for one man, but that’s why you have two husbands.” Alistair grinned. “Shall we take on the lady's challenge?” he asked Cullen.

“I’m up for anything right now,” Cullen declared, bending down slightly to place his arm under Evelyn’s thighs and behind her back.

“You really don’t have to do that,” she protested. “I don’t want you to get hurt.”

“We’ll be fine,” Alistair told her, and Cullen wondered if he wasn’t too optimistic.

The skirt was slippery and he found it rather difficult to locate Evelyn’s legs under it, but at last he succeeded, lifting her up. She did feel heavier than normally, the material adding much weight to her rather slim frame. For a moment he worried that she was going to slip out of his grasp, the slick fabric not helping him in maintaining a firm hold, but Alistair was by his side in a flash, holding up the skirt and lifting the train, while Evelyn wound her arms behind his neck, pressing herself close.

“You two are mad.” Evelyn laughed as they started to move, every step slow and precise. “What
about my shoes?”

The two silvery shoes were on the floor behind them. Cullen had no desire to return for them.

“Leliana will find them. I think she has an additional sense which allows her to locate unattended and expensive footwear,” Alistair said. “It’s a good thing we’re on the right floor. I don’t think navigating the stairs would be very easy.”

“I’d say we can do just about anything together, but then again I’m not actually doing anything now,” Evelyn offered. “But I am rather enjoying it.”

“I’d enjoy it much more without the material in the way,” Cullen said, smiling at her.

“That’ll come soon,” Evelyn assured.

“Not soon enough,” Alistair muttered, waving the material. It was true that peeling off all those layers wasn’t going to be quick work.

Cullen could see Evelyn was about to come back with some kind of a retort, but then they were almost by the doors to Alistair chambers, their chambers.

“Let me down,” Evelyn said, and they obeyed, careful not to tangle anything. “Now close your eyes,” she told Cullen.

This time he didn’t hesitate, didn’t question it, just did as she bid.

“Is this another surprise?” he only asked.

“Yes,” Alistair responded.

There was the sound of doors opening, and then Alistair and Evelyn took his hands again and lead him inside. He followed them, a smile on his face.

“Is it the thing which I’ll thank Bull for?” Cullen persisted.

“Yes,” Evelyn confirmed, a laugh in her voice.

They moved from room to room, headed to the bed chamber. At last they stopped, let go of his hands, and he felt himself being turned around. They didn’t say he could open his eyes, and so he kept them close, despite wanting to take a quick peak, intrigued as they moved next to him.

“You can look now,” Alistair announced, and Cullen blinked his eyes open.

What he saw was… himself. Or rather his reflection in an enormous mirror. Alistair and Evelyn were at his sides, arm to arm, both smiling brightly. Evelyn rested her head against his shoulder and Alistair wrapped an arm behind his back. Cullen placed his hands on their waists, bringing them even closer, and soon felt and watched their fingers entwining with his there.

Cullen rarely had the opportunity to see himself with them like that and now he took everything in greedily. They looked perfect together, he decided. He felt a bit conceited thinking that. He’s been told he was attractive enough times that he somehow accepted that fact, but years of Chantry preaching of modesty and humility made him still harbor a bit of guilt at such boastfulness. But if not on his wedding day, then when was he allowed to feel handsome and proud of that fact? Especially when to his left was the most attractive man he’s ever seen and to his right the most beautiful woman.

He wanted to hold that image in his mind for all times. They looked elegant, regal, and so very
happy. Evelyn appeared almost ethereal in her white gown, with the veil fluttering behind her, while he and Alistair were very dashing in their crimson and brown. They matched, Cullen realized. Even the gold trimming on their clothes was similar. That was surely no coincidence.

“Maker, we haven’t done anything yet, but just looking at us like that makes me excited,” Alistair told them.

“This was a spectacular idea,” Evelyn said.

“I just want to remind you that I was the one who came up with it,” Alistair announced. “Back in Kirkwall.”

“You thought of putting the mirror on the ceiling. That wouldn’t have worked,” Evelyn corrected.

As they bickered, Cullen noticed that the bedposts were framing them, the bed right behind them. The mirror wasn’t there just so that they could see themselves in their wedding attire together. It was there so that they could see everything else.

“Oh,” he said, and watched the grin spreading over his own face. He followed the path of his own hands in the mirror, traveling up Evelyn’s torso, towards her breasts, and down Alistair’s middle, and behind his back, to settle on his arse.

Perhaps Alistair would’ve said something to the charge levied by Evelyn, but then they were both watching themselves in the mirror as Cullen touched them.

“You’re catching on to our plan, I see,” Evelyn murmured.

“I am. And I wholeheartedly approve of it.” The notion of seeing himself touching them thrilled him deeply. “But first let’s get you out of this thing so I can actually see you. And touch you properly. I can’t feel a thing through that thick boddice.” His hand was on her breast, and yet he didn’t feel the soft curve of it, only the stiff material.

“A great plan as always, Commander.” Evelyn smirked and moved to stand before them.

With quick movements, she took out the pins which held her updo and veil in place, and her hair tumbled down over her back. She shook it out, the lightly curled strands bouncing around her shoulders, and placed the veil and pins on the floor.

“There are some buttons at the back, I believe,” she told them, and Alistair and Cullen moved to undo them.

They were tiny shiny things, covered by a small fold of material, and undoing them was not a simple tasks. Alistair moved from the bottom up, and Cullen from the opposite direction, both of them muttering.

“Perhaps I should call Isabela in to help? I’m sure her small fingers could do the trick,” Evelyn suggested, and Cullen looked up in time to see her teasing smile in the mirror.

“We’re fine,” he responded, setting to his task again, valiantly fighting the miniscule buttons, until his and Alistair’s fingers met in the middle.

The material of the top gave way.

“Ha!” Alistair called out triumphantly.
“A great success indeed.” Evelyn grinned, pushing the straps down her arms. She continued moving the material of her dress down, until she could step out of it.

“I already feel lighter,” she announced, stretching her arms.

But their work was far from done. There was another complete dress underneath, only this one more plain, and without the absurd train. That one was a bit easier to take off, and once it joined the first layer on the floor, an intricate lace corset was revealed. It pushed Evelyn’s breasts high and offered glimpses of her skin. Cullen traced the skin just above the material, smooth and warm, and watched as her breathing quickened. He was tempted to dip his fingers under the stiff fabric and tease her hardened nipples, but resisted, remembering they still had much to do.

Evelyn made a disappointed little sigh when he removed his hand, and started yanking at the ties holding her petticoats, which caused Cullen to smile. At last she showed as little patience as they did. Both he and Alistair rushed to help her, and together they made layer after layer drop to the floor. White material was pooled around Evelyn’s feet as she stood before them in her corset, matching lacy knickers and sheer white stockings. She took one more step towards the mirror, leaving her dress and various underthings behind.

Cullen took a step forward, reaching out to undo her corset, but Evelyn shook her head.

“There is to be equality in this marriage, isn’t there? And I feel like you’re very unequal to me as far as clothes are concerned,” she announced, the corners of her lips quirking upwards.

“We must remedy that immediately,” Alistair announced, starting to undo the buttons of his jacket.

Cullen followed his example, watching himself and Alistair in the mirror, their movements almost synchronised.

As they worked on their clothing, Evelyn was slowly loosening the ties of her corset. When they remained in their undershirts, the corset gaped open, showing the straight line of Evelyn’s spine. As they pulled the undershirts above their heads, Evelyn pulled the material open, and the moment their garments hit the floor, hers did as well. She stood there, gloriously nude from the waist up, her pink nipples tight and tempting, begging to be touched.

“I thought I’d like to have a painting to immortalize this scene, but now I see only a sculpture would do,” Alistair said, “because you look perfect from every angle.”

Cullen could only nod his agreement.

“You look rather attractive as well. I like seeing myself flanked by two shirtless men who look like they can barely restrain themselves from pouncing on me.”

At the words Alistair took a step forward, but Evelyn shook her head, placing her fingers at the edges of her stocking.

They both took the hint, pulling off their boots and socks, as Evelyn slowly rolled one stocking down her leg. Their belts were gone when the second stocking sailed to the floor, and Evelyn was left standing with her fingers hooked in the sides of her knickers.

Cullen quickly yanked his underwear together with his breeches off, and noticed Alistair doing the same thing. When they stepped out of the clothing and looked up, their eyes went wide, as they noticed Evelyn completely bare, not even hair covering her mound.

“The pain was worth it to see your faces,” she said, grinning.
“Pain?” Cullen and Alistair questioned almost at the same time.

“Yes, well, wax isn’t particularly pleasant, especially around sensitive places.” Evelyn shrugged.

“You didn’t have to do that,” Cullen insisted, wincing at the thought of the procedure she must’ve undergone.

“I know. I was curious how it’d look, and feel.” Her fingers ghosted over the bare skin, slipping between the folds. “It feels very sensitive,” she added, her voice low.

That was the last straw. Cullen couldn’t stand by idly watching. He strode over to her, just as Alistair did the same. They were side to side, right behind their wife, their hands going to feel the newly exposed skin. She allowed them to do so, removing her own fingers, moaning when their calloused fingers moved over the bare flesh. It was soft, so impossibly soft, but it wasn’t enough to touch just that, and soon Cullen’s finger slipped into the wet heat of her, prompting another moan. Alistair was joining him there momentarily, and Cullen watched with rapt attention as their fingers moved over Evelyn’s flesh together.

He felt and saw her hands going above her head, stretching and then reaching behind, her fingers tangling in their hair, nails lightly scratching over their scalps. Their fingers moved noticeably faster between her thighs as she touched them in turn. Evelyn strained against them, her body arching, breasts pushed forward with the motion, her hips undulating. Cullen placed his free hand on her arse, squeezing, trying to hold her steady, but only succeeded in making her gasp and grin.

“Maker, I never thought of myself as very vain, but I can’t stop staring at myself,” she confessed.

“You finally see what we see every time we touch you. It’s a beautiful sight,” Cullen told her.

With a nod and a thoughtful expression on her face, Evelyn leaned back to rest more fully against their chests and lifted up her leg, tilting it back to wrap behind Alistair’s thigh. She was open now, her folds parting, the glistening pink flesh of her quim visible in the mirror, along with their fingers, on and inside it.

“Oh,” was all Evelyn managed to say.

“You also left me speechless the first time,” Alistair commented, smiling, before bending down to kiss along her neck.

Evelyn tilted her head to give him better access, and continued to watch herself being pleasured by them. Alistair reached her ear and tugged on the lobe with his teeth, causing her to shiver again.

“If you like it this much, then I can’t wait to see your reaction to watching yourself get fucked,” Cullen murmured at her other ear, feeling his already near painfully hard cock pulsing at the thought of seeing himself or Alistair taking her.

Those words elicited a surprised gasp from their wife, high and hitching. Evelyn closed her eyes for a moment, probably conjuring those images behind her lids, but she quickly opened them back up, her irises a more intense shade of blue than normally.

“You’ll look so good,” Alistair promised.

“You’ll feel so good,” Cullen added.

Evelyn shook under their hands, her legs quivering with the strain of holding the rather unnatural position, but her lips, stretched in a smile, trembling with her moans, showed she didn’t care about
any discomfort, too focused on pleasure.

Alistair’s free hand sneaked over he back to hold her hip, his fingers digging into the soft flesh, holding her in place and adding another sensation.

“I’m so… so… so…” Evelyn started, her voice breaking, her eyes fixed between her own thighs, on two sets of fingers, one moving in and out of her rapidly, the other methodically circling her swollen nub.

“And now you’ll watch yourself as we make you come,” Cullen told her.

As if on command, Evelyn found her peak, her back bowing, her voice a loud moan, her inner walls squeezing Cullen’s fingers. Her eyes drifted closed but she fought to open them again. That look of wonder on her face was nothing new, but Cullen liked to think it was more than the physical pleasure, that she marveled at her own body, at what it could do, at what they could wring out of it.

At last she shook her head, indicating she was done, and Cullen and Alistair stopped, taking their hands away. Evelyn put her foot back down on the floor, let her arms fall to her sides, and swayed a bit. Both hands free, Cullen and Alistair steadied her, holding on to her waist and hips.

“I didn’t think this would affect me so much,” she confessed, leaning back, letting them support her.

“It was beautiful, watching you, watching you watch yourself,” Cullen told her, and kissed the top of her head.

“Again, my idea. You tell me not to call myself stupid, so here I am, calling myself brilliant for coming up with it,” Alistair interjected.

For a moment Cullen thought Evelyn was going to return to the argument about the impracticality of ceiling mirrors, but then she just smiled.

“You are indeed brilliant, my king. It was a splendid idea, and what you just did was also rather remarkable. What you both did.” She cast her eyes at Cullen. “I believe a reward is in order.”

With that, she reached to take hold of their erections, giving them a long stroke.

“I’ve never objected to a… a reward,” Alistair responded, his voice catching as Evelyn repeated her movement, a bit more firmly this time.

Cullen was again transfixed, watching their reflection in the mirror. There she stood, their new wife, a tiny creature, when compared to them, but so very powerful, so very in charge in that moment, her small hands and long elegant fingers holding them so intimately, her movements practiced, but always somehow completely new. She looked so beautiful, and so concentrated on her task. How amazing it always was to be on the receiving end of her focus, to have his pleasure be her one goal.

“You’re very quiet, dear,” she said, looking at Cullen, at the same time twisting her wrist just so, pulling a groan from him.

“I’m making the most of this surprise, watching,” Cullen explained.

Alistair was also rather quiet, but by no means passive. One of his hand still held Evelyn’s hip, but the other migrated to her breast, fingers first brushing gently, teasingly over her puckered nipple, before filling his palm with the warm flesh, handling its full weight, squeezing, the nipple trapped between his fingers. The sensation wasn’t the only thing catching Evelyn’s attention, causing her to moan and quicken the pace of her hands – she also stared intently in the mirror, biting her lip. Cullen
followed his husband’s example, his own had traveling over the soft skin of Evelyn’s stomach, finally reaching her breast, pinching and pulling on the nipple, seeing it redden further, and noticing Evelyn’s breathing quickening.

“You two… You two are impossible,” she muttered, probably meaning it as a feigned complaint, a chastisement for distracting her from the task at hand, as it were, but couldn’t manage to make her voice sound annoyed.

“Impossibly amazing,” Alistair started with a grin, which quickly morphed into a slack-jawed expression when Evelyn’s clever fingers first moved down to gently squeeze over their balls, before quickly reaching up to smear precome over the sensitive heads.

“Now I’ll see you spill over my hands and then Cullen’s fucking me to within the inch of my life,” Evelyn announced, regaining her composure.

Cullen would’ve ordinarily taken this as a challenge, eager to make her lose that composure again, but this time he decided to relent. Perhaps it wasn’t so much a decision, as a deep need in his body which wasn’t going to be denied. The whole day felt like one long drawn-out prelude to that night, making him more than eager, and all they’ve been doing behind closed doors was starting to be too much, especially after Evelyn told him he was the one to have her next.

“Yes, yes, yeees,” Alistair agreed, and that excitement in his voice pushed Cullen even further towards his end.

He wasn’t sure what was the most overwhelming – the voices of his lovers, their touch or the unfamiliar but so very welcome sight before him – their three bodies pressed together, skin beaded with sweat, muscles straining, hands criss-crossed over bodies, moving frantically, eager to deliver more pleasure, a glint of gold on their fingers.

Cullen barely registered that Alistair’s hand was moving from Evelyn’s hip, but then he felt it squeezing his own arse, and he was coming, hearing himself groan, profanities and his spouses’ names mixed together. His traitorous eyes kept trying to close, but he forced them open with supreme effort, watching his release covering his stomach and Evelyn’s hand, from the corner of his eye seeing the same thing happening to Alistair. It was a sight he was not likely to forget, stirring his blood whenever he thought of it.

When they were both done, Evelyn gently pushed away from them to bend down and wipe her hands on someone’s clothing, before passing the material to Alistair, who in turn gave it to Cullen.

“A drink to replenish our strength, perhaps?” Evelyn offered.

“Never turn down a reward, never turn down a drink,” Alistair told her, settling on the bed.

“Certainly,” Cullen agreed, joining him in the middle of the mattress.

Evelyn moved to a corner where a bucket with ice and three already opened bottles rested. She picked the whole thing up, and carried it to the bed, offering each of them a bottle.

“A toast then,” Alistair suggested, when Evelyn was sitting by their side, a bottle in her hand. “To a good wedding, a great wedding, and an incredible wedding night.” They clinked the necks of the bottles together and drank.

“I’d like to drink to the whole wedding preparation insanity coming to a successful conclusion, and the three of us finally starting our life together,” Evelyn told them. They drank to that as well.
It felt so pleasant, so freeing, Cullen decided, after the overly formal wedding and reception to just sit like that – the three of them, gloriously naked, a bottle in each of their hands, their hair messy, their skin damp, a smile gracing all their faces.

“Is there something you’d like to raise a toast to?” Alistair prompted Cullen.

“I think you’ve expressed all the most important sentiments, so I’ll just raise my bottle to the mirror idea, and to Bull, who, I’m assuming, pushed the huge thing here.”

Evelyn and Alistair laughed and drank.

“When I first suggested we do this, Evelyn was immediately on board, but then we had to work out the logistics, and that was not very easy,” Alistair explained. “At last, with our wife’s permission, I told a small white lie, namely I informed my steward that my bride was extremely fond of mirrors, wanted to see herself from every angle and at various distances, so it had to be very large.”

“It was a lie at first, but now I think I truly enjoy mirrors.” Evelyn grinned. “Regardless, the mirror was placed in a dressing room, where it surely would belong if inspecting dresses was what we’d want to do with it, and so we had to figure out a way to move it here.”

“There is no non-suspicious way of demanding a mirror be moved to the foot of your bed,” Alistair continued, “and I didn’t wish for my steward to have a heart attack, or for the servants to gossip about our wedding night. We tried to move it together, but we were unable to do so. I’m not sure how many servants carried it here, but it was definitely more than two.”

“Finally we realized we needed help, and there was only one person who had the physical strength to do that, and who wouldn’t judge, or rather would wholeheartedly approve. We asked Bull for his assistance, and he was more than happy to do that. With his aid we maneuvered it here,” Evelyn finished.

“He’ll be far too pleased with himself, but I’ll thank him tomorrow,” Culled decided, taking another long pull from the bottle. “We do have wonderful friends,” he added with a smile.

“That we do. We’re damnably lucky. I never felt that more than tonight,” Alistair admitted.

“And we’re about to get even more lucky,” Evelyn told him, her smile mischievous.

“I have a feeling you have a plan for that as well,” Cullen observed, reaching over to place his bottle on the nightstand.

It was not difficult to figure out that their plan would not end at step one – get a mirror. There was something more they wanted to do. He was fine with that situation. He would’ve certainly preferred to be the one scheming with Evelyn to surprise Alistair or arranging things with Alistair to do something special for Evelyn, or even for the three of them to settle on a plan together, but he felt certain excitement now, ready for whatever was going to happen, secure in the knowledge that his spouses knew him well and would certainly deliver something that was going to please him.

“That we do,” Evelyn confirmed, placing her own bottle next to his. “And I’ve begun to explain it to you already.”

“Naturally. Me fucking you to within an inch of your life, if I remember correctly.” Cullen felt the corners of his lips quirking up, even as he tried to remain serious.

“Precisely.” Evelyn nodded.
“And after that…” Cullen prompted.

“Not so much after that, as at the same time,” Evelyn begun, her smile widening further.

“I’ll fuck you,” Alistair explained.

That… that was a good plan. An excellent plan. Cullen felt his cock stirring, beginning to harden again as the idea took hold of his mind. He’s never been in that position, he realized now. And why could that be? Now it sounded very appealing. Perhaps before he was worried about not being in perfect control, being too overcome, but now he didn’t care about such things.

“I have a feeling you approve,” Evelyn told him, reaching out for his cock, giving it a stroke.

Instead of answering, Cullen all but threw himself at her, pressing her to the mattress, kissing her hungrily. She responded with equal enthusiasm, wrapping her arms around his back and parting her legs for him. But before he could do what she demanded and fuck her, she was pushing him away.

“This won’t work,” she announced, as they both sat up. “Take me from behind,” she instructed, turning to face the mirror and kneeling, her legs parted.

Cullen followed her lead, moving behind her, seeing his larger frame towering over her. He allowed himself to touch her, observing his hands mapping her thighs, stomach and breasts, her lips parting on small sighs. He made the journey back down, caressing the bare skin between her legs, but before he could move his fingers between her folds, Evelyn shook her head.

“No teasing,” she pleaded.

This time Cullen didn’t try and make her beg, but did as she asked, taking hold of his cock and guiding it to her entrance. Evelyn reached back, placing her hands on his waist and neck, steadying herself. They both watched as he slowly sank in, her tight warmth enveloping him inch by inch, making him groan.

When they were completely joined, Cullen took firmer hold of her hips, and started to move, slowly at first, but then he felt her nails biting into his skin, and he took the cue, picking up his pace.

“Is this what you want?” he asked as he slammed into Evelyn, watching her body shake with the movement, her breasts bouncing.

She flashed her teeth in a broad grin, her fingers digging into his flesh, no doubt leaving marks. But how could he mind when he was leaving marks of his own, having her in his unyielding grip, bracing her for each new hard thrust, which she relished, panting, pushing back against him.

“Do you like what you see?” Alistair questioned, his voice drifting from behind them.

“Yes,” they both responded immediately, watching the word leave their own lips.

“So do I,” their husband informed them, crawling towards them. “And it makes me eager to join in,” he continued, settling at their side. “But before I can do that fully, I’ll watch you come again, Evelyn.” He reached out, one hand landing on Evelyn’s breast, pinching the nipple, the other going between her legs, first touching the place where they joined, making Cullen hiss at the additional stimulation, before settling on Evelyn’s nub.

“Now?” Evelyn asked, as if not quite believing, despite her laboured breathing and strained body clearly showing that she was close to her end.
“Yes, now,” Alistair confirmed, reaching for that commanding voice of a king, which he so rarely used.

“Now,” Cullen echoed.

One more sharp thrust, and Evelyn was falling apart, keening, her body tight as a bowstring, her nails scratching at Cullen’s skin as her hands attempted to find purchase. She tried to watch herself, Cullen noticed her valiant efforts, but he wasn’t sure how much she caught with her head falling back. He couldn’t fault her for her distraction, himself grappling for control as her inner walls were squeezing his cock, forcing him to grit his teeth to keep himself from joining her.

At last she was done, her movements ceasing, and so Alistair removed his hands, and Cullen stopped thrusting, yet remained inside of her. She was about to go limp, Cullen knew when her fingers were letting go of him.

“On all fours,” he commanded.

“No,” Alistair added.

With that, Evelyn leaned forward, supporting herself on her hands, any trace of sluggishness gone from her body. She looked up, into her own face in the mirror, droplets of sweat bedding her temples, a smirk on her lips.

“Whatever you say,” she purred. “I’m not tired. Put me through my paces.”

“We will. We certainly will,” Alistair promised, “but you’re not the only one who needs attention.”

He picked up a vial and poured a generous amount of liquid on his palm, spreading it on his straining cock, making it glisten temptingly. Cullen wished to touch him, but before he could try, Alistair was moving behind him, that slick hand traveling over his arse, a finger pushing into him.

“You’ll also be… worked over,” Alistair whispered in his ear, sending a shiver down Cullen’s spine.

Cullen turned his head to look at him, to challenge him perhaps, but when he saw his beloved face so close, all the could do was lean in to kiss him. He tried to make Alistair lose his composure, using every trick he knew, but ended up breaking away and shamelessly groaning himself when another finger joined that first, stretching him further.

His hips started moving on their own accord, and he felt Evelyn pushing back against him. She moaned when he thrusted harder. Her head fell, and Cullen instantly missed seeing her face. He reached out and gathered her hair at the back of her neck and pulled lightly but insistently. Her face came into view again, her lips stretched on a prolonged moan.

“I’m watching, I’m watching,” she told him, her voice husky.

“And do you like what you see?” Alistair asked.

“Maker, I do. I looked away only for a moment, but I’d do it again, if I get the same reaction.” Her grin was broad and unashamed when Cullen pulled on her hair again.

“I’d hate to ruin your fun, my queen,” Alistair started, “but I’m afraid Cullen will need to hold on to something more sturdy than your hair soon.” With that there was another finger at Cullen’s arse, filling him, making him eager for more.

“Are you going to fuck me already?” he asked, looking Alistair in the face, almost challenging.
“Eager, are you?”

Alistair was far too pleased with himself, but Cullen didn’t mind.

“Yes, I am very eager to finally have your cock in me. You’ve been teasing me for far too long,” he responded.

“Did you just call me a tease?” There was a laugh in Alistair’s voice, even if he tried to pretend to be offended. Nonetheless, he removed his fingers, making Cullen gasp at the sensation.

“He did. And rightly so,” Evelyn chimed in.

“I’m in the minority here, I see. I’ll have to prove you wrong,” Alistair decided, positioning himself behind Cullen.

“Good.”

Cullen let go of Evelyn’s hair and placed his palm between her shoulder blades, pushing her further down. She went easily, stretching out her forearms and supporting herself on them. Cullen followed suit, pressing himself to her back, resting his hands by her sides. He felt her heated skin, the moan she let out vibrating against his chest.

“This will work even better than what I intended to do,” Alistair praised.

Now he was towering above them, his wide shoulders and broad chest visible above their backs, the muscles of his arms shifting as he placed one hand on Cullen’s hip and took hold of his erection with the other. Cullen watched his own mouth fall open as the head breached him, and then the rest of the length was slowly, so slowly pushing into his body, until Alistair bottomed out and ceased his movements. Cullen relished the feeling, his head falling down without his conscious though, his forehead resting on Evelyn’s back.

“Good?” he heard Alistair ask.

“Very,” Cullen confirmed, lifting his head to see their reflection. He was squeezed between them, the two people he loved, the two people he would never get enough of. There was something very powerful in not only feeling them, within and without him, but also seeing that, seeing himself wrapped up in them.

They stayed still for some moments, all of them probably thinking similar thoughts, transfixed by the scene before them. Evelyn was the first to snap out of that trance. Her movements were restricted, but she wiggled her hips slightly, and that small action send a spark down Cullen’s spine, making him respond, pulling out a bit, just to return quickly with a hard thrust, chasing that sensation. As he moved, he felt Alistair follow him.

It took them a moment to synchronise their movements, to get to the place where it felt like they were one being, focused on one goal, one sensation rolling through them, from one to the next in a wave.

This felt more intense than ever before. Cullen always felt a sense of connectedness when they were together, but it was heightened now. He thrusted into Evelyn’s warmth, feeling her so tight around him, responsive and eager, and he could almost know what she felt, his own body yielding, accepting, being filled as well.

“Maker,” he managed to gasp out, his voice full of awe.

“It feels good being the center of attention, doesn’t it?” Alistair questioned, his wide smile clearly
showing he knew the answer. He quickened his pace, forcing Cullen to do the same, their shallow thrusts getting harder.

“So very good,” Cullen agreed. “We’ll be repeating this.”

“Yes, we... yes, we... yes... oh... yes...” Evelyn’s statement quickly devolved into a series of moans, as their movements kept intensifying, quicker, harder.

Evelyn’s body trembled under the onslaught, but she held her ground, responding in her limited way, pushing back, arching her spine, her breasts dragging against the material of the cover with each movement.

Cullen saw himself also pushed and pulled, not as steady as normally, but somehow unrestrained in his acquiescence. Behind him, Alistair was the one who seemingly retained the most control, but he was also lost to the sensations he was experiencing.

Their faces bore similar expressions, a mixture of sheer pleasure and also concentration, as they focused on delivering the same pleasure to each other. Never before was Cullen able to see them like that, all together in this act, and there was certainly something to be said for finally watching all of their faces at the same time as they joined in such a manner.

Tension was building between them rapidly, their movements quicker and quicker, their voices higher and higher. Cullen always prided himself on not coming first, on being able to control his own body, but he felt that control slipping now. It was all too much, too intense to resist. The sight before him, the sounds in his ears - harsh breaths, muffled curses, names spilling out in moans. And there were the sensations - two warm slick bodies pressed to him, moving against him, over him, in him, pressure and friction and closeness. A hard thrust which made sparks dance somewhere in the pit of his stomach, and prompted his own hips to move, feeling that tight grip over his cock. Another push, another wave of sensation, another groan, which might have came from him.

“I’m going to...” he started through gritted teeth, trying to hold himself back.

“I’m close too. Come,” Evelyn beckoned. Her arm moved, and understanding her need, Cullen instead pushed his own hand between her body and the mattress. It was hard to move, but he felt Evelyn grinding herself on his fingers, her soft flesh against his palm, wetness coating his digits.


“Please,” Evelyn added.

Cullen was done for. He couldn’t fight any longer. He didn’t even resist when his eyes closed on their own accord as his orgasm finally took hold of his body. It felt impossibly intense, the pleasure engulfing him. He felt Evelyn join him moments later, her inner walls squeezing over his cock, pulling new sensations from him. He was almost done when Alistair was there with him as well, adding another feeling inside of him, making him shiver in prolonged bliss, before pulling out and falling somewhere behind him.

When he opened his eyes, he saw his reddened cheeks and sweaty brow, and under him, almost crushed, but apparently not bothered by that situation, Evelyn, who was also trying to catch her breath. Cullen gently rolled off of her, finding himself on his back.

“Now the marriage is consummated. Can’t take it back,” Evelyn announced, turning to her side and moving closer to wrap an arm around Cullen’s middle.
“I was about to say that!” Alistair told them, crawling towards them and plopping down on Cullen’s other side.

“And that’s why we’re married,” Evelyn told him, reaching out and patting his hand.

“Well, I wasn’t going to say that,” Cullen observed.

“Yes, and that’s why we’re all married - someone has to not make bad jokes,” Alistair explained, before yawning.

“Bored, are you?” Cullen asked, feeling his own mouth falling open on a yawn.

“Just worn out. ‘t’s been a long day.”

“I suppose we should sleep a bit,” Cullen allowed, “but first you have to tell me how you went about making the exact same ring for me.” He lifted up his hand, looking at the small intricate carvings around the band.

“Oh, that was simple. I played the fool. I said I was afraid I’d lose my ring, so I needed a duplicate,” Alistair explained.

“Clever.” Cullen turned to kiss Alistair quickly, and then looked to his other side, just to see Evelyn already asleep. He placed his lips on her brow briefly, and smiled as she stirred, pressing closer to him.

“Wake us up soon,” Alistair told him, “we can’t waste this night.”

And that’s what Cullen did. They came together again and again that night, before finally falling into deeper sleep just when the sun was rising, safe in the knowledge that no servant was going to wake them. They royal wedding night had its’ privileges.

Chapter End Notes

Whenever I write smut, I worry that I’m going too far, getting to weird, and recently I’ve found something that helps with that feeling. Some of you also write, so maybe this will also help someone. I’ve seen “Call me by your name”. If you’re unfamiliar with it, it’s a beautiful movie about two young men and their summer romance set in the picturesque Italian countryside. But there is one scene which at first disturbed, and then, oddly enough, inspired me. If you’ve seen the movie, you know I’m talking about the jizz peach. If you haven’t seen the movie - one of the characters masturbates with a peach and the other almost eats it. Take a second to absorb that, and if necessary suppress the feeling of gagging. It was super gross. I smudged my eye makeup hiding my face in my hands, everyone in the auditorium was sniggering or making whale noises of distress. But the movie is still undoubtedly wonderful. I didn't regret seeing it. It was nominated to a boatload of awards. A man had the idea for the book and for the jizz peach scene, and he didn't shrink away from it. He wrote it, and he send it to a publisher who accepted it. An editor kept the scene. Someone decided to adapt it to the big screen. A production company gave them a bunch of cash to film it. Actors were down to play that scene. People lit the shot, checked the sound levels, composed the frame. The props master picked the goddamned peach which was going to be so pitifully used. They picked more than one, in case they needed more takes. Critics defended the jizz peach
scene talking about the emotional significance of it. What does all that tell me? That no matter how far out your idea is, someone will like it, will support it. You shouldn't censor yourself, stifle your weird creativity, because people will understand it. And even if someone doesn't like it, one scene, one idea doesn't necessarily ruin the rest, doesn't negate what you did before or after. So now whenever I doubt myself, I think "jizz peach", which is my shorthand for not being afraid, not doubting myself, because if a movie with a jizz peach can be so widely acclaimed, if people put their actual names to it, then I can put my pseudonym to some mirror fucking and perhaps someone will like it.

That was a very long rant. Anyway, as always kudos and comments would be very much appreciated. And if you’ve seen the movie let me know if people in your auditorium were also slowly losing their minds during that scene.
Married life was, in Alistair’s humble opinion, the perfect state of existence. To be sure, there were people forced into arranged unions, who had every right to complain. If he were somehow made to marry Anora, he’d have been downright miserable, he had no doubt. He was more than amenable to Cousland’s wishes back then, in awe of the young but incredibly charismatic and capable warden, who was also his first true friend, and so he agreed to become king. He did it despite the fact that every fiber of his being was screaming that he was meant to be a warrior and not a ruler. He drew the line at marrying the scheming widow of the brother he never knew, though. That was one of his best decisions, he now knew. Another was resisting his advisers for years, fighting against all matches suggested to him. He was waiting, it was clear from this vantage point, waiting for the two perfect people who would complete him.

If anyone married for love, and still complained, droning on about lost freedom or having to make some small adjustments in his life to fit in the person he chose, then he was a damnable fool, and there was no excuse for his nonsense, Alistair decided. Theirs was not an easy situation, and a lot of concessions had to be made, though mostly related to their positions and not them as people, and yet they made it work. They didn’t see each other as often as they’d wish, but it was so much more than before their union. They had their duties, but they could share their burdens and seek council from those who cared for them most. It was much easier to suffer through an early morning meeting, knowing he’d see his spouses at lunch time, it was not so annoying to have to read through stacks of documents, knowing that his reward for hard work was a night with people he desired above all others.

Yes, marriage had plenty of things to recommend it, if it was a love match. There were significant looks exchanged over the dinner table, which let him know that there were two people who knew exactly what he thought of a particular bann’s nonsensical boasts, and shared his opinions. There was the presence he felt in the throne room, making him feel like he had true support against the pressure from nobles. There were long afternoons when no-one dared interrupt him because he was spending time with his new bride (and groom). There was constant laughter filling his chamber, long hair on his pillows, missing buttons from clothing found under armoires, wine carelessly spilled on expensive but ugly rugs, papers which had to be rewritten because they got crumpled or stained on one of their desks. There was joy in simple things like meals, walks in gardens or horse rides to the countryside. There was pleasure in marking every corner of the palace as theirs, making love with wild abandon in various rooms and on furniture which were often times unsuited to such activities. All in all, every aspect of his life, from the official kingly duties, to evenings when he was just Alistair, were made better by his new union.

Before he proposed, he feared his lovers would grow to regret their decision to marry him, but in the months since they unequivocally joined their lives with his, they showed no signs of sadness, anger or exhaustion. They sometimes complained about this duty or that, one person or another, but it never seemed to weigh on them too heavily, and soon they were joking again, planning a pleasant diversion to make them all forget about the court life.

Alistair used to worry that they’d feel lonely in their new home, in a completely foreign city, after years of being surrounded by their friends and companions, but again, that worry was proven to be unfounded.
Evelyn’s ladies in waiting suited her very well and were on their way to becoming her true friends. They were all very different women, but they also had quite a few things in common. All that blackmail material which Leliana gathered on them was likely going to be gathering dust - the women took to Evelyn easily and were very unlikely to do anything to harm her. Rather they did all they could to make her comfortable. Alistair liked hearing his wife laughing with her ladies, relaxed and happy with those new people.

But they didn’t provide only amusements - they were smart and capable, and they aided in Evelyn’s queenly duties. Just as he expected, Evelyn was very active in her new role, listening to her people, developing diplomatic relations and even having her input in the royal budget. She was much better with numbers than he ever was, and more frugal as well, cutting down on spending in the palace and getting rid of redundancies. Lady Antonia, with her connections in merchants’ guilds, proved particularly useful in that regard, finding cheaper and more reliable suppliers. Lady Luisa on the other hand provided an opportunity for Evelyn to talk frankly with those who used to support Loghain, and try to gain their full trust and support. It was slow going, but she was making some inroads, and Alistair couldn’t be prouder of her.

Cullen was also gaining new allies and friends. His subordinates found him professional and occasionally strict, but always kind. He scoffed at nobility still, but a few younger nobles who had an interest in the military became his companions. When he didn’t have to provide inane small talk, but could instead talk of things which meant something to him, he didn’t find it disagreeable to interact with the rich and powerful. He even found a new chess partner, one who surpassed him in skill, but was never boastful, instead willing to teach Cullen new things. Several sons of the most influential houses wished to train with Cullen. At first he was rather skeptical, but soon grew to enjoy his time with the boys, spending more and more time with them outside of the practice ring, talking them on hunts and excursions. It also didn’t hurt that one of the boys was the son of the Bann of Rainesfere, who treated Cullen so awfully on their first visit to Denerim. Now the Bann had to most likely hear his son constantly singing the praises of the man he thought beneath him. That was a perfect revenge, Alistair thought.

The one thing which proved a challenge, was making Cullen as much an equal to himself and Evelyn in public without attracting undue attention to their deep connection. Some Banns were rather jealous of the fact that an outside, born a commoner to boot, was so important to the king, held his ear and one of the most important positions at court. Alistair and Evelyn worked tirelessly to appease those Banns, and helped Cullen gain their favor. Evelyn’s ladies in waiting proved invaluable in this respect. Alistair was once again grateful to Leliana and Josephine, who helped select them.

At times Alistair and Evelyn felt uneasy having to host their guests together, without Cullen, or presiding over events as a couple, but Cullen was rather unbothered by it, always smiling and explaining how glad he was that he was not made to entertain dignitaries or pay useless compliments to nobles. It was true that such things were not what Cullen enjoyed, but Alistair did wonder from time to time if their husband wouldn’t have wished for more public recognition, for a bit of prestige. He asked that question more than once, and always received the same response – a combination of a laugh, a kiss, and a firm denial. Cullen only admitted to wishing in some situations to say “my wife” or “my husband” out loud. That was why when their friends visited, he used those words almost constantly, which everybody found rather endearing.

All in all, things were going very well, and yet at the back of Alistair’s mind there was always one worry, one secret fear, which wasn’t likely to leave him soon - the matter of his Calling. He’d find himself thinking about it on cold nights, staring up at the darkness, pulling Evelyn and Cullen tighter to himself, as if they could stop the dreaded moment from coming. When he was busy, he would not think of it for days or weeks, but something always inevitable triggered the thought, and he was again feeling the tight grip of fear.
Before Evelyn and Cullen he wasn’t as fearful of the thought of dying. Of course he didn’t wish to hasten the day, but he was mostly resigned to the idea. Back then his life was rather monotonous, he didn’t have many things to look forward to, and so he didn’t have much motivation to live to be eighty. Or even fifty. Now he did. Now every year could bring something wonderful, and the idea of missing it was downright terrifying. Now he lived for them, as much as for himself, and he knew his untimely death would break their hearts.

It was out of his hands, he knew. Cousland was looking for a cure, and if anyone could find it, it was him. Alistair hated waiting, hated not knowing and not being able to do anything. He couldn’t very well abandoned his own kingdom, which Cousland practically thrust upon him, to join him in the search. And barring that, he couldn’t leave his spouses behind. They’d go with him if that was an option, he knew, but they were not free to do as they pleased.

Some nights Alistair could convince himself that Cousland would be back any day now, that it was inevitable, and so he could fall back asleep, but other nights, he imagined his old friend defeated, telling him sadly that there was no hope for either of them. On those nights he tried not to twist and turn nervously, so as not to wake Cullen and Evelyn. He didn’t always succeed - they’d wake and ask him what was wrong. He lied to them and he was not ashamed of that fact. They didn’t need to know. They did know, about the Calling and everything it entailed, but they didn’t have to live with it constantly, didn’t have to feel like their very blood was something foreign, waiting patiently to destroy them. They couldn’t do anything so there was no point in making them anxious. So instead of telling them the truth, he would say that he had a nightmare or that some small governmental matter was keeping him up. They always did their best to put him at ease, talking with him in low voices, holding him, and if they still had enough energy, making love. That served to put his mind at ease for some time, but not permanently.

Before he met Cullen and Evelyn, Alistair used to think that another aspect of the Calling which was going to cause him grief was going to be his inability to father a child, which was not only expected of him as a king, but also which he imagined could be the one thing that would brighten up his dull life, but at least that changed for the better.

He didn’t have to fear being childless - Cullen would father their child, and they’d raise it together. He was going to love that child as fiercely as if it was his own flesh and blood. He already loved the idea of a tiny creature with blue eyes and curly hair, smart and strong and kind, taking the best from the two people Alistair loved most. He was going to spoil their child, he had no doubt. Or at least he’d try, and Evelyn and Cullen were going to stop him. Their child was going to know nothing but happiness, he vowed. Even if he knew he couldn’t stop all of the world’s cruelties, he was going to do his part to make sure their child always felt loved and protected.

The thought of that imaginary child, which was yet to be born, always brought a smile to his face, and yet in his dark nights he wondered how much of his or her life he was going to see. If no cure came, would he have to die not having seen their child grow up, get married?

They were yet to speak of children, too wrapped up in each other, too busy with all their engagements, so he tried to push those worries to the side.

It’s been weeks since he was last plagued by those kinds of fears, when he got a letter from Cousland. He was looking over his correspondence one morning, sorting letters into “boring and unimportant” and “boring but important”, when he saw Cousland’s name on the envelope, and felt his heart stutter in his chest. He turned the envelope over and over in his hands, afraid to open it. What if it was bad news? Could he live with it, with all his hope snatched away?

In the end he called Evelyn and Cullen over, needing their support. When they came, he handed the
letter over to Cullen and asked him to read it out loud, while Evelyn held his hand. They were more excited than he, more certain, and it gave him comfort.

When Cullen read the words “we have a cure”, Alistair felt like falling on his knees and sobbing with relief, joy overtaking him, but then came the next part of the sentence, chilling Alistair’s blood - “but it doesn’t work for everyone”. Now Alistair wanted to sob, but for a very different reason. The whirlwind of emotions was unbearable.

Seeing his fear, Cullen and Evelyn rushed to tell him that the cure had to work form him, that there was no other option. They spoke with such honest conviction, that he calmed down somewhat. Not all was lost, he still could hold out hope.

Cousland was going to explain everything in person. He, as well as Morrigan, were coming to Denerim in a matter of weeks. The wait was going to be torture, Alistair had no doubt. Evelyn and Cullen were aware of his anxiety, and in the following days did everything they could to take his mind off it. Which proved very enjoyable. In the end Alistair was laughingly telling them that it was almost worth it, to have this life threatening uncertainty hanging over his head, if it meant they were having a second honeymoon. It wasn’t as if their life together was devoid of excitement, but those days were more intense than that, reminiscent of the stolen weeks they shared before their wedding. Everything was more urgent, more intense. It would be exhausting, if they tried to sustain such a pace for longer periods, but for a time it served well.

Cousland didn’t say when he was arriving, so it was a complete surprise to Alistair, when it was announced that his friend was just at the gates. It didn’t help that Alistair’s had a hearty breakfast, which in that moment seemed to want to crawl up his throat. It was rather fortuitous that Evelyn and Cullen were there with him. Together they hurried off to their private chambers to await the guests. Alistair felt like pacing, and so his wife and husband paced along with him, occasionally placing a hand on his shoulder or whispering some comforting words.

They stood stock still when there was a knock at the doors, and Cousland and Morrigan were announced. The first thing which struck Alistair about his friend was that he looked both much older and yet less tired. In that moment Alistair forgot his worry and only felt glad that Cousland was alive.

“It’s been so long,” he said.

“Too long, my friend,” Cousland responded with a smile, before striding up to Alistair and embracing him. “You look good,” he added, letting go.

“Marriage serves me well,” Alistair responded. “Speaking of which, let me introduce my wife and husband, Evelyn and Cullen.” He didn’t even hesitate as he said the words. Cousland would understand, he had no worries in that regard.

“And I thought I had an unconventional marriage.” Cousland grinned. “It’s a pleasure to meet you two.” He kissed Evelyn’s hand and shook Cullen’s.

“The pleasure is ours, my lord,” Evelyn told him smoothly.

“Please, call me Fergus. You both know my wife, don’t you?”

“Yes. Her help to us and the Inquisition was invaluable,” Cullen responded.

Morrigan was somewhat hanging back, letting the meeting unfold. It’s been years since Alistair last saw her, just before Cousland left on his quest. During that visit all their old quarrels were put aside, and the three of them spend a few pleasant days together, trying to make good memories. Alistair
never pretended he was going to miss Cousland more than Morrigan did, or even as much, but he could understand her worry and that brought them closer. They were older, that helped as well. Their tempers weren’t as volatile and they could actually find common ground on some subjects. Alistair wasn’t sure if it was motherhood that changed the apostate so much or something else, but in the end it didn’t matter. They weren’t exactly friends, but they weren’t enemies any longer, brought together by the man they both cared about. Now seeing the way she looked at Cousland, like she couldn’t believe he was with her again, Alistair softened towards her further.

“It’s good to see you, Morrigan,” Alistair greeted, and for once meant it.

“You too Alistair,” came the response, which sounded genuine. “And also you, Evelyn, Cullen. Congratulations on your marriage.” She also didn’t make jabs or even tease. It felt like she was simply accepting Alistair’s choice without judgment.

“Thank you.” Evelyn smiled. “Under any other circumstances I’d offer to take you to your rooms so that you could rest after your journey, but as you can imagine, we’re very eager to hear all that you have to say. Your letter gave us both hope and caused us to worry, so please pardon the rudeness and let’s talk first.”

Alistair was infinitely grateful to her for directing the conversation. She had to be as anxious as he was.

“Certainly.” Cousland nodded.

“We can have some refreshments,” Evelyn amended, still trying to be a good hostess.

“We’re fine, thank you. We left Keiran in our room so that we may talk freely now,” Morrigan told them.

With that settled, Evelyn lead them to a seating area, and they settled down, Cousland and Morrigan on one couch, and Alistair and his spouses on the one facing it. Without a word Cullen and Evelyn laced their fingers with Alistair, offering wordless comfort. Cousland smiled at the gesture and even Morrigan, never known for sentimentality, looked somewhat touched by the gesture.

“I don’t think you want to hear about my entire epic journey right now, so I will tell you about the most essential things first,” Cousland started. “You will not like it, Alistair, but I’ve had help from the Architect.”

Alistair felt his lips pursing in anger. That abomination. The fact the Cousland left it alive still made Alistair angry. To him, it mattered little how good one’s intentions were - what was important, were the results of their actions, and what the Architect did ended with his homeland being torn apart, with thousands dead or displaced, a tragedy to rival the Orlessian invasion.

Evelyn and Cullen squeezed his hands, no doubt feeling the emotions roiling inside of him, and trying to calm him.

“I know you hate him and think I’ve made a mistake when I spared him, but he was absolutely invaluable to me on my quest - he had some downright inspired ideas, told me what kind of research and ingredients I should look for, and in the end made the potion which cured me, and many others, of the Calling. I couldn’t have done it without him. He wanted to do something good, to make it right…”

“What he did can never be forgiven. It’s a debt he can’t pay,” Alistair interjected impulsively. He’d never not hate the Architect, and yet… If he truly was the one to find a way to cure the Calling, then
Alistair had a reason to be grateful to him. He didn’t like the feeling, but he wasn’t going to reject the cure just because it came from an undesirable source. “Let’s hear the rest,” he added more calmly. “You said it doesn’t work for everyone. How so?”

Cousland sighed, and suddenly he looked years older. Alistair could see how heavily what he was about to say was weighing on him.

“You remember the Joining, don’t you?” he asked. “As if anyone could forget. Not everyone makes it through. Two other men died during my Joining. The same goes for the cure - not everyone can survive it. I think of it as un-Joining. Reversing the process is even more difficult and painful that undergoing it. The Architect warned me that not everyone will complete it successfully, but he had no idea about the pain. It’s excruciating.”

Cousland stopped. There was something dark in his eyes, something which made Alistair tremble with fear. Morrigan placed a hand on her husband’s arm, and he exhaled, somewhat returning to himself.

“I was the first to try it. I knew I couldn’t allow anyone else to be experimented on.”

“My brave fool,” Morrigan muttered, somewhere between fondness and anger.

“It burned, it singed. I couldn’t speak, I couldn’t see. I didn’t know what was going on around me. It lasted for almost two days, the Architect told me. Two days of perfect agony. And then I came to and I felt… new. Like there was nothing foreign in me, like I was perfectly whole. I was tired from what happened, needed food and sleep, but on the whole it was as if I was reborn. It gave me hope and so I set out from the laboratory the Architect keeps, vials of the cure in my bag, ready to change Warden’s lives. I went to those who happened to be stationed the closest to where I was. I explained everything to them - told them about the pain, about the possibility of dying. Most of them wanted to take the risk. Almost half of them didn’t survive. They didn’t perish immediately. Some suffered for hours before taking their last breath. I watched them, tried to help them, but it was all in vain. We don’t know who will make it and who won’t, just like before the Joining. I… I feel like I killed them.”

Alistair wasn’t sure what he was feeling - fear, sorrow, anger? One thing was for certain - he didn’t blame Cousland.

“You did your best, I know it,” he said. “You didn’t kill anyone. It’s the… the everything. This curse which hangs over us Wardens. There is no fairness - we don’t get anything for free, nothing comes easy to us, nothing, not even death.”

He was mostly angry then, angry at the world, at the Maker, at the magisters responsible for the Blights and for the fact that Wardens were needed, needed to be used and discarded.

“If it’s so dangerous, perhaps the cure should be given to those who already feel the Calling - for them death is already imminent, and that would be their only chance,” Cullen suggested, ever the calm and logical thinker.

The small flicker of hope which Alistair felt at his words was soon extinguished by Cousland’s response.

“We’ve thought of that. It doesn’t work. When the Calling takes hold, it’s too late to reverse the process. None of the Wardens who started to feel it survived the cure. I’m sorry.”

When the words truly sank in, Alistair felt dejected, cold dread creeping up his spine. Since he got
the letter he knew not everyone made it, but he thought there were some rules, something that was going to tell him if he would survive. And now he knew taking the cure was a gamble. Waiting was also a gamble. Maker, he was never a good gambler.

It was simpler when he thought there were only two options - no cure would be found, and then he’d live until the Calling claimed him, or there would be a cure and all his problems would be solved instantly. He was not prepared for this thing in between, for having to make such a huge choice.

“What am I to do?” he asked, his voice small and weak, pathetic. “Should I wait? What if it’ll be too late?”

It was Morrigan who broke the silence which descended on them at his plea.

“Take the cure now,” she said calmly. “And don’t try to joke that I want to get rid of you. I don’t. We’re past that. We don’t know who survives and who doesn’t, but you’re a stubborn one, and I think you won’t let it take you. You’re strong, Alistair, just like Fergus, and you’ll be fine, just like he is.”

The words were so uncharacteristically kind and supportive, that they shook Alistair out of his stupor.

“You really believe that?”

“As a matter of fact I do,” Morrigan told him solemnly. “But I think that’s something you need to discuss with your wife and husband.”

She got up and Cousland followed.

“We’ll be in our rooms,” Cousland informed them. “If you decide to take it now, we can be there with you, and if you want to wait, then we’ll live you a vial. It’s all up to you.”

They were by the doors when Cousland stopped.

“I’m sorry, Alistair. I knew you were counting on me. I’m sorry I couldn’t deliver something better.”

“Don’t apologize,” Alistair told him. “It’s not your fault. You did more than generations of Wardens before you, but not even the great Fergus Cousland can cheat whatever it is that enslaves us.” Alistair gave him a wan smile, which Cousland returned.

“Thank you, my friend,” he said, before leaving.

Once they were alone, Alistair looked from Evelyn to Cullen. They were both trying to put on a brave face, but he could see the fear in their eyes.

“I… I think Morrigan is right,” Evelyn said. “I think you’re strong and you will make it, and yet… I’m so afraid, Alistair. I believe in you more than in anyone besides Cullen, but I’m still so scared.” Her lip trembled, and she bit it, trying to retain her composure.

“I’m also scared,” Cullen admitted. “We can wait, but I know that wouldn’t be easy. If you took the cure too late, if we missed the chance… I’m not sure I could live with it. But if you did it now and you…” He couldn’t even say the words it seemed. “If we lost the years we could’ve had… Maker, this is unbearable. I don’t want you to think I don’t believe in you, in your strength, but this is such a huge risk.” He scrubbed a palm over his face, trying to hide his emotions. “Whatever decision you make, I will be afraid, but I will respect your choice.”
“So will I,” Evelyn agreed.

“I’m to make that choice?” Alistair asked. It was his life, he knew it, but on their wedding day he swore to share it with them, so it felt like it belonged to them as much as to him. “You also get to have a say in this.”

“I want you to be safe,” Evelyn whispered.

“I don’t want to lose you,” Cullen said almost at the same time.

“That doesn’t help much.” Alistair chuckled without mirth.

“I’m sorry,” Evelyn told him. “That may be cowardly, but I’m afraid of giving you council - if I make the wrong choice I’ll have to live with that knowledge, that guilt, for the rest of my life.”

Alistair could understand that. He wouldn’t want her to potentially feel like she was responsible for his death, but he was also afraid of making the choice himself.

“Please, tell me what you’d do in my place. I need you,” Alistair begged. “I know in which direction I’m leaning - tell me your opinion, and if we all agree, I’ll do that. If at least one person thinks another option would be better, we’ll continue to talk it over.”

“That’s very logical.” Cullen gave a half smile. “Let’s write it on a piece of paper, so that we know no one influenced anyone.”

Alistair and Evelyn nodded. It felt strange taking the paper and writing potentially the most important life decision on it, as if it were a ticket for a raffle at a fair. Once the ink dried, Alistair looked at the words again, and felt strangely more confident. He hoped his spouses wanted the same thing, and yet he feared the finality of that decision.

They came together to stand over a table and simultaneously placed the pieces of paper on it. Alistair closed his eyes in a moment of fear, and then opened them quickly. ‘Now’ was written on three pieces of paper.

“I’m still afraid,” Evelyn told them in a quiet voice.

“As am I,” Cullen followed.

“That’s good, because I’m also scared.” Alistair laughed nervously. “But that is the choice.”

“It doesn’t have to be,” Evelyn rushed to assure him.

“You can change your mind. We’ll respect it. Those papers can’t dictate your fate,” Cullen added.

“I was afraid before the battle of Denerim, and still I went into the fray. I was afraid before proposing to you, and still I did it. Fear is natural, but it can’t hold us back,” Alistair declared, the words coming from somewhere deep within him, as if he himself was just realizing their truth.

“Did you just compare proposing to us to a battle with an archdemon?” Evelyn asked, genuine amusement in her voice.

“I suppose I did. I’m a romantic like that.”

They all laughed, harder than the joke merited, perhaps, but they all needed it, that release, that respite from things being terrifying.
“I can’t wake up every day wondering if I’m not too late,” Alistair said, when their laughter subsided, needing to explain himself, to perhaps convince himself further. “I can’t let fear rule me. I have to trust that I’ll be fine, that I’m strong enough. And if Morrigan believes in me, then I must have a solid chance.”

They laughed again, and it felt more natural, more free.

“I stopped taking lyrium in the middle of the fight against the biggest evil the world has ever known,” Cullen told him. “It was a risk, some may say it was foolish, but I couldn’t wait forever to reclaim my life. I didn’t directly risk dying, but if I were too weakened I could’ve brought death on myself on the battlefield. Still I did it. If I was strong enough to endure it, then you surely will come out of your trial victorious.”

That was a comforting thought, that Cullen of all people, the rational, logical Cullen, took such a risk, and it paid off.

“I took many risks in my life, and never regretted it,” Evelyn added. “I’m not one to sit back and wait and fear forever, which is why I would’ve taken the cure. I also know that you’re strong, that you have reasons to fight whatever is in that cure that can harm you. You have so many reasons to live - your will will be stronger than anything else, and so will your body. My faith in you has to be stronger than my fear.”

“That settles it then,” Alistair decided.

Was it too quick? Should he think more on it? Should he wait a bit more before taking the cure? He could wait a year or two or five - most Wardens lived that long, it would be safe most probably, and yet he knew he didn’t want that. He’s waited long enough, he’s been afraid long enough. Living in that kind of fear would’ve been a kind of death. He had to be brave, trust in himself.

“When would you like to do it?” Evelyn asked.

“Today?” Alistair wasn’t sure.

Cullen opened his mouth, and then closed it.

“What is it?” Alistair prompted.

“I’m not sure I should say anything, I…” He sighed. “We can’t go into this without complete confidence that it will work, and if we’re confident we don’t need to… do anything, prepare anything, but it feels odd just to jump into it. Unless that’s exactly what you want.”

Alistair shrugged. A few hours ago he was drinking tea and thinking about going for a ride to the countryside, and now he was about to change his life, their life irrevocably.

“I understand what you’re saying. We can’t have doubts, but people make preparations even if they travel to another kingdom - they make a will and such.”

“You won’t need it,” Evelyn insisted, her voice not matching the confidence of her words.

“It’s not just about us,” Alistair explained. “I almost forgot in all this excitement, but I rule a kingdom.”

“Yes, that.” Evelyn sighed.
“If anything were to happen, I want you to convince the bannorn to let you replace me,” Alistair told her.

“I…”

“You’d be a better ruler than I ever was. There is no doubt. Back me up, Cullen.”

“You could do it,” Cullen agreed.

“They’d want me to marry some noble, and I’ll never stand for that,” Evelyn protested.

That was a wrinkle in that plan. Alistair couldn’t be naive enough to pretend the bannorn would accept Cullen as Evelyn’s consort.

“Get pregnant!” Alistair suddenly exclaimed, inspiration striking. “Right away. Get pregnant, say the child is mine - you’ll have an heir and so they won’t have a reason to force you to marry.”

Evelyn and Cullen both wore expressions of shock.

“Would you expect us to fuck over your dead body?” Evelyn snapped. “I don’t expect I’d be in an amorous mood after the man I love died.”

“I’m sorry,” Alistair mumbled.

“No, I’m sorry.” Evelyn shook her head sadly. “This is all mad. We don’t need to think of that. You’ll be alright. We’ll have a child for love, not for grief.”

“Another reason for me not to die.” Alistair gave a half smile. “Let’s not belabour the whole thing. It’s time.”

“So now?” Cullen asked. “Not, perhaps, tomorrow?”

“No,” Alistair told him decisively. “I can’t feel like I’m preparing too much for it. I can’t have a last meal, a last night. I’ll write a short letter to Eamon, and we’ll be off.”

For a moment he thought Cullen might argue, but in the end he only nodded. Maker, but he loved him for that, for his quiet strength and acceptance.

Decision made, Alistair went over to the desk and scribbled a few lines explaining the situation. He tried not to think about it too much. It was only a precaution, he told himself.

When that was done, he called for a servant and told him to deliver the letter to Eamon, with a warning that he should not open it before the next day. As the servant departed, Alistair wondered if he didn’t owe it to Eamon to tell him everything in person, but decided against it. Eamon would probably try to talk him out of it, and he couldn’t stand any more talking.

He didn’t want a goodbye, but before leaving the room in search of Cousland, he kissed Evelyn and Cullen in turn, hard and long.

“For good luck,” he explained, and they smiled at him. Maybe they believed him, maybe they didn’t, but they didn’t say anything.

They found Cousland and Morrigan in one of the guest rooms, finishing a meal.

“We’re doing it now,” Alistair announced without preamble.
“Good.” Morrigan smiled.

Cousland only nodded. For a moment something passed over his face. Alistar could guess that his friends was scared, that he worried that’d if something were to go wrong, he’d feel like Alistair’s death was his fault. It only lasted a moment. Soon Cousland was back to his confident self.

“We better get you into bed,” Cousland announced.

“Why, Warden Commander, propositioning me right in front of our spouses - how very scandalous,” Alistair joked.

He could see Morrigan rolling her eyes, while Cousland only laughed.

“It’s going to get even more scandalous. I’m going to have to tie you down.” His friend grinned.

“I can do that,” Cullen supplied helpfully, before starting to cough nervously. Alistair new his face was red, before he turned to look. “Oh, fine, we’re all adults here, aren’t we?” Cullen muttered, trying to retain some dignity.

“I didn’t say anything.” Cousland grinned even harder.

Morrigan on the other hand was smirking.

“I can see you valiantly trying not to make fun of me, since my life is in peril,” Alistair told her, “but you don’t need to restrain yourself - I can take it.”

“I’m not the one who is being restrained,” the apostate responded.

“That’s the Morrigan I know and tolerate.”

Morrigan inclined her head.

“Do you think knowing what exactly will be happening to your body will help you now or only make you worry?” Cousland asked, getting them back on track.

“I don’t want to know,” Alistair responded. He would know soon enough, and worrying ahead of time was pointless.

“Alright. I’ll get the vial,” Cousland said.

When he returned, their small group walked to the king's private chambers. Cousland suggested they use a different bed than the one they always slept in - whether it was so that Alistair wouldn’t associate it with painful experiences or because it was going to be ruined, Alistair did not know. And he didn’t wish to ask, instead doing as his friend suggested.

It felt final, and Alistair sensed panic raising in him. In that moment, as if reading his mind, his spouses took his hands, and he was calm again. It was going to be fine. He repeated that phrase like a mantra. Or maybe they were telling him that, he wasn’t sure.

“You can change your mind,” Cousland told him, his voice studiously calm.

“No. It’s now or never.”

“Then lie down,” his friend instructed.

Before Alistair let go of Evelyn’s and Cullen’s hands, he kissed each of their palms.
“I love you.”

“I love you too,” they both responded, a slight tremor in their voices.

He looked at them again as he lied down on the bed. Cullen had his arm around Evelyn’s waist, supporting her, and keeping her close to himself, for comfort, Alistair suspected. They both smiled at him with confidence.

“I’ll see you in a day or two,” he told them.

“We’ll be here,” Cullen assured.

“Waiting,” Evelyn added.

“About those ropes, then?” Alistair asked Cousland.

“We’ll get them when the time comes. Make yourself comfortable for now.”

His friend handed him an uncorked vial.

“Cheers!” Alistair exclaimed, trying to make up for another bout of nerves with a bit of false bravado.

The potion tasted strange. First it it didn’t taste like anything. It was more of a feeling of something slick and heavy at the back of his throat, but then it turned bitter, and then hot, like the most spicy Antivan pepper. He coughed, feeling the substance crawling up and down his digestive tract.

‘Maker, this is going to be bad,’ was his last coherent thought.

After that the pain seized him completely. Something was inside him, something foreign and angry. It burned, burned hotter than dragon fire, hotter than he thought possible. Was his skin catching on fire? Was his flesh melting off? He could not tell, his eyes almost unseeing, covered with red mist. He felt it most keenly in his veins, as if molten lava was being poured through them. He was making some kind of a sound, he was fairly certain of that, not words, he couldn’t form words - it was something like yelping, something which reminded him of a wounded animal, wordlessly begging for its agony to be over.

People were near him, he heard their voices, indistinct, quiet when compared to the pounding of blood in his head. He tried to focus on the voices, to distract himself from the pain. Evelyn was on his right side, and Cullen on his left. They spoke to him, but he still couldn’t make out the words. Did they touch him? It was hard to tell, pain overriding any other sensations.

He lost track of time, unable to tell if he suffered for minutes or hours. It was getting worse and worse, that pain gripping his entire body, squeezing him from the inside. He had to make it stop, he had to, somehow.

A thought struck him - he had to get rid of this thing crawling through his veins, that was the only way. He wanted to scratch it out, so he reached with his fingers to the insides of his forearms, and that was when someone pinned his arms down. He wailed, angry, desperate. Why were people stopping him from doing the only thing that could bring him relief?

There were voices again, frightened voices, urgent voices. And then he felt rope being tightened over his wrists, cutting into his skin roughly, for a split second distracting him. He couldn’t move his arms anymore. He struggled in vain, his veins burning. He snarled, tried to say that he needed to do this, that they had to let him go, but no words would come out.
“Be calm, my love, I beg you,” were the first words he could make out. It was Evelyn, right by his ear, close enough to cut through the sounds in his head.

He still struggled, but he closed his mouth, not wanting to drown out her voice.

“It will be alright, it will pass,” Cullen promised.

They kept talking in calm voices, telling him reassuring things, making plans for the future. It helped a bit. The pain was there, but he had something other than that feeling to focus on.

Time passed. How much, he had no idea. The burning slowly subsided, he stayed still, basking in the momentary reprieve, when he felt his insides twisting, his throat constricting. He gagged, and was quickly lifted up into a sitting position. It was in the nick of time, because just as he got upright, he vomited blood. He could taste it, that familiar metallic tang at the back of his throat. His throat and stomach seemed to be tied in knots, painful in a new way. He vomited some more, and then heaved, tremors wracking his frame. Someone wiped his face and poured water in his mouth. He spat it out, and drank the next portion. It helped get rid of the taste, but the pain remained.

He was lowered again, when it was clear he didn’t have anything more to throw up. Slowly, ever so slowly the pain in his gut lessened, before it returned to his limbs, to his veins. He wanted to yell, but his throat was sore, useless. Maker, how was he going to survive this?

A voice whispered that he should give up, stop the pain permanently. That was not his voice, he realized. It was something from outside of him, and yet from within. He shook his head, as if that could dislodge the voice. He was not giving up. He said he was going to get through this, that it was going to be fine. He was not giving up.

It was hard to resist, to tell himself that he could take the pain, than he accepted it as a part of his change, his salvation. When he felt weakest, he listened for the voices of his spouses. He tried to lean into them, get closer. They must’ve understood his need, pressing themselves closer to him at first, then practically lying on top of him, anchoring him. Sometimes he heard only one voice, then the other, then both. Did they sleep? Has it been so long? It might’ve been a day or it might’ve been a year, it was all equal to him.

The pain subsided again, and he vomited again, feeling like he was spitting fire along with blood. He was given water. He was laid down. He felt one pain morph into another. That process repeated itself several times. How many he couldn’t count.

At times he felt himself crying in pain, the tears oddly cold against his overheated skin, before they were wiped away or kissed away. They were still with him, every step of the way. That was a comfort. If they were there, then it meant that things existed outside of his pain, good things, pleasant things, things he was going to feel again, if he was only going to hold on long enough.

A few times he came close to giving up, to letting the cold, calming darkness take him, but he always managed to stop himself. Or they stopped him. A memory, a voice, an insistent touch - they would bring him back from the precipice.

After he vomited for the last time, he fell into what must’ve been the deepest sleep of his entire life. There was nothing, perfect silence.

And then he woke up. His throat was raw and he was hungry, but he felt strangely good, somehow free. He opened his eyes and saw the ceiling clearly above himself, not obstructed by any kind of red film. He flexed his hands, which it turned out were resting on two warm backs. He was alive, he realized. He made it through. He was alive! He wanted to shout out in his joy, but his voice came out
as an odd rasp. Nonetheless it was effective in waking up Cullen and Evelyn. They got up from his chest and looked at him with wide eyes.

“You two look terrible,” he whispered hoarsely.

And they did. Their eyes had dark circles under them. They both look pale and tired beyond words. Evelyn’s hair was a tangled mess on her head and Cullen’s curls were plastered to his head with sweat. Their clothes were rumpled and bloodstained.

“It’s good to see you too,” Evelyn responded with a slight laugh, before her eyes filled with tears. “I love you so much,” she managed to say through her tears, before throwing herself back on him.

Cullen followed suit, embracing him with almost bruising strength, his tears soaking through Alistair’s tunic.

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” Alistair murmured to them, holding them tightly.

He could hardly believe it himself, and yet his body felt new, felt whole.

“Welcome back,” Cousland greeted him, when Evelyn and Cullen let go of Alistair, and they all got up. “You were under for a little over two days. We were very worried.” His friend also looked tired. A little more put together, his clothes clean, but that wasn’t saying much. “Those two never left your side. They hardly ate, slept for an hour at a time. You are very lucky to have them.”

“We are lucky to have him,” Cullen corrected.

Alistair wanted to kiss him right there and then, but he knew his mouth had to smell like a slaughterhouse. He could put off that kiss for a bit. They had time now. So much time. He grinned at the thought.

“We were so scared, so scared,” Evelyn murmured, her hands moving restlessly over his arms and legs, as if searching for a source of pain.

“But we knew you were going to make it,” Cullen added, gripping Alistair’s hand tightly.

“I was afraid too. I heard your voices. You helped me so much. I’m not sure I would’ve made it without you,” Alistair confessed. Saying so much made his throat tired.

They held him again, smiling and crying, happy and relieved.

“Let’s eat. Let’s wash and eat and celebrate,” Alistair declared at last. He was alive, so very very alive, and he wanted to take advantage of that fact.

First order of business was washing his mouth. Repeatedly. Then changing his sweaty, bloody clothes. Then eating. Everything he did, Evelyn and Cullen were by his side, as if they couldn’t let go of him, afraid he’d disappear. They washed with him, changed with him, ate with him.

The meal fortified Alistair somewhat, just in time for Eamon to burst into his chambers. His longtime adviser was in turn overjoyed and furious. Alistair mostly drowned out his complaints and recriminations. He knew he acted rashly, he knew he put Eamon in a difficult position, having to rearrange all his meetings and lie to everyone in the castle from servants to banns, about the reason for Alistair’s absence, and that of Evelyn and Cullen, he knew it could’ve all ended in disaster. But it didn’t. And now he could announce to the entire kingdom that he was cured. That had to count for something. Eamon huffed and muttered angrily, declaring that a meeting of the bannon had to be called. Alistair agreed. All he asked for was a day or two to recover before he had to start writing
letters and seeing his subjects full time.

He planned to recover by getting drunk with Evelyn, Cullen, Cousland and Morrigan, and then retiring to the bedchamber for some life affirming love making. The getting drunk part of the plan was manageable, but as soon as he found himself on his bed, he fell asleep. As they later told him, his spouses also succumbed to sleep almost immediately. The whole experience took a toll on him, apparently, and on them as well. But that was alright. They had another day, and another decade. And one after that. He planned to live till he was a hundred now. Evelyn and Cullen were going to have to keep up.

Chapter End Notes

It's been embarrassingly long since my last chapter (don't I always start my author's notes with that sentence?), but I've been working on my thesis, which I've finally finished, and in November I'll be getting my master's degree, which I think is a pretty good excuse.

I have to admit to something here - I'm an idiot. Only after 30 chapters did I find the perfect title for the story. It should've been "The rule of three". Missing such a good pun fills me with shame. I may have to invent a time machine to fix that huge mistake, so if you wake up in a reality that's almost exactly like this one, but not quite - I did it. Although if I succeeded, then everything would've always been like this, so... This is why I don't trust time travel plots - they almost never hold up to scrutiny.

Anyway, this chapter was all plot, but the next one will be 2% plot, 98% Chantry fucking. If you thought you were going to get out of this story without some good 'ol blasphemous roleplay, then you don't know me yet. But you're about to. Queue evil laughter.

If you have a moment leave a comment or kudos. I really appreciate it.
“Maker’s breath,” Cullen muttered when the doors to his office fell shut behind Lady Winifred. “Hopefully this will be the last one.”

If he thought he was a sought after match as the Commander of the Inquisition’s forces, he was much mistaken. His position at the Ferelden court brought with it a real challenge. Marriage proposals were coming his way with startling regularity. It didn’t matter that he came from nothing, that he’s held the title of a knight for a very short time, that he had no lands of his own. He had the king’s and queen’s ears and commanded their forces, and that kind of power was very appealing to nobility. Sometimes it was pleasant to know that those who used to look down on him now had to respect him and even vay for his attention and support, but most of the time it was annoying.

Since the wedding and his appointment as the commander of Ferelden’s armies, he’s had to suffer through more than he thought possible. Women tried to seduce him, parents attempted to all but sell their daughters to him and brothers touted the virtues of their sisters in a manner he found rather disconcerting. He was tired of it all. How he wished he could just say “I’m a married man”, and be done with the whole nonsense. But that was not an option. He couldn’t very well explain that the king and queen trusted him not only with their army but also with their hearts.

At times he’d get a few week of respite between proposals, but this particular week has been rather full of them. Just as he was gearing up for another polite refusal that day, a thought struck him. It was rather brilliant, if he did say so himself, and he hoped that in this one move he managed to end his torment. He just needed to tell his spouses about it.

It was already late in the afternoon and he didn’t have much to do. A day’s delay in responding to letters wasn’t going to hurt anyone. He could as well go talk to Alistair and Evelyn now.

When he reached their rooms and entered, the first thing he heard was their laughter. That was definitely the best part of his day - returning to them after hours of boring meetings or taxing reports. They would all sit around, talking about what happened to each of them, making jokes, advising each other. It was very ordinary, very domestic, and he loved that fact.

To think he’d ever imagine a relationship between three people as nothing but sin and depravity. Of course the physical part of their relationship was still very important, but living together afforded them more time and comfort, and so they didn’t have to rush, didn’t have to squeeze as much intimacy as possible into short weeks. Now they could just read books in bed, drink wine and watch sunsets from a balcony.

Ever since Alistair took the cure, things were going rather smoothly. The two days when he was suffering were some of the worst Cullen could remember. Being powerless to help the man he loved, instead forced to watch him suffer, was agonizing, but in the end everything ended well. For the first time in years, Cullen had nothing to worry about, which was both very strange and very pleasant. He did have to think of ways to say no to a proposal for an uptinth time, but that was a minor complaint, compared with contemplating the death of a spouse.

Cullen had faith that a cure for the Calling was going to be discovered, but at times he found himself worrying. He didn’t say anything to Alistair or Evelyn, not wanting to make them anxious. As it turned out Evelyn did the same. And all those nightmares Alistair had weren’t about being crushed to
death by a giant cheese wheel - he worried about his mortality. They talked about it soon after Alistair took the cure, and decided they were all idiots. They weren’t going to be keeping any more secrets or pretending everything was fine when they were worried. Luckily it looked like they weren’t going to have many causes for anxiety.

“I’m home!” Cullen called out to them. That was their greeting whenever they entered those rooms. Theoretically they lived in the palace, but those chambers were where they truly felt at home.

“We’ve already opened some wine. Come help us finish it,” Evelyn responded.

Cullen found them in the sitting room, on the couch, Alistair sitting up, while Evelyn lounged, her legs stretched on his lap. There was a wine bottle and three glasses on a nearby table.

“I have something to tell you,” Cullen announced, moving to the couch.

Evelyn sat up, allowing him to join them.

“It doesn’t sound like it’s bad news,” Alistair observed.

“It isn’t. It’s actually rather good, I think,” Cullen responded. “You know how I’ve been having a particularly active week, as far as proposals go.”

Alistair and Evelyn both nodded.

“If it wasn’t demeaning to you as our husband and commander, or politically ruinous, I’d institute an office of the Royal Paramour so that people would leave you alone,” Alistair told him.

“I appreciate the thought, but that won’t be necessary. Lady Winifred came over, trying to convince me her daughter will bear me strong sons, and in that moment inspiration struck. I told her I vowed to take no wife and no lands, only serving my king, queen and country.”

Cullen looked from Alistair to Evelyn, watching as the news was sinking in and broad smiles appeared on their faces.

“Brilliant!” Alistair exclaimed.

“I have no idea why we haven’t thought of this before,” Evelyn said. “It should’ve been obvious to me, especially after that lovely conversation we’ve had about vows when we first met.”

“What conversation?” Alistair asked, looking at them questioningly.

“We never told you?” Evelyn wondered. “That was such a pivotal moment for us!”

“What she means to say is that it was the first time she made me blush,” Cullen explained. He remembered that conversation all too well. There was this beautiful woman asking him such personal questions, smiling at him hopefully, and he was both pleased and embarrassed by that fact.

“You must tell me now, then,” Alistair insisted.

“I was very drawn to this gorgeous ex-templar, as you very well know, and I needed to find out everything about him I could,” Evelyn started. “I asked a lot of questions about boring, conventional things, preparing to ask the most important one - whether or not he took a vow of celibacy. When I did, he was adorably flustered as he told me he hadn’t, and I wanted to jump for joy. I could pursue him. I didn’t expect then that I’d take some two years and an appearance of another man for me to succeed, but that was the moment I knew I wouldn’t let him go.” Evelyn stroked Cullen’s
cheek affectionately, smiling at him.

“You knew then? You never told me that.” To think that she was so sure even then...

“I hardly needed to remind you what a sentimental fool I am. I had my moments of doubt and sorrow, but I think deep down I was certain.”

“I think that’s adorable,” Alistair said, patting her leg. “I wonder… If he said he took the vow, would you have not pursued him? He wasn’t a templar any longer, so that vow technically wouldn’t have been in effect.”

“I… I’ve never had to think of that before.” Evelyn scrunched up her brows. “I don’t believe I’d even flirt with him in that case. I’m not much of an Andrastian, but that doesn’t matter - I respect people’s choices. If I knew this was his path, his decision, then I would not do anything to interfere with it.”

“That’s very considerate,” Cullen told her. “I’m glad I never took such a vow - it was hard enough for me to accepting your love without such a promise standing in my way. To know that I could’ve missed out on all of that is just terrible.”

“Perhaps then I and Evelyn would’ve had to ask Dorian to use some time magic to send us back to the past to dissuade you from taking it,” Alistair joked.

Cullen laughed, and noticed that Evelyn didn’t. Instead…

“You’re getting one of your ideas,” he told her, studying her face.

“I… It’s nothing.” Evelyn waved her hand dismissively.

“No, it’s not. You must tell us,” Alistair coaxed. “Do you truly think you can shock us at this point?”

“Yes, actually I do,” Evelyn insisted.

Cullen wasn’t sure what she had in mind exactly, but he could see in which direction she was drifting, and he was… curious. He expected panic to well up, but instead he was left only with curiosity.

“It’s alright,” he said. “You can say it. I know I can refuse if I want to.”

“Fine.” Evelyn sighed. “What I’m thinking is this…”

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It felt odd, being in the large palace chapel when it was empty. All that space around him was foreign. But he shouldn’t think of it as the palace chapel. For this night, it was the chapel in the refuge where he trained. He had to get into that mindset, to try and believe he was years younger, without experiences - good or bad.

He’s had to play a character before, and found it rather easy, because it was just that - a character. This was closer to the truth, more personal. Every character had something of him in it, an aspect of his personality that was exaggerated, but this time he was going to be a slightly different version of someone he used to be.

He tried to remember the boy he was before taking his vows, before his vigil. He was eager, excited to start serving, but he was also very strict, a tryhard, as other recruits called him. He wanted to give
his all to the order, wanted to be the best templar he could possibly be. He studied and trained rigorously, even in his free time.

He did contemplate taking the vow of chastity, especially since his feelings were so confusing. Looking back at it, it was obvious he was attracted to men, but back then he couldn’t understand or accept it. He’s spent a lot of time praying to the Maker for guidance, wondering if the vow was going to make everything easier, but in the end he didn’t put his name on that list. Something stopped him. He was scared of his feelings, but he was also curious, and he couldn’t close that door for himself, couldn’t discount the possibility of love coming into his life.

It was a good choice he made then, he was sure, as he waited for his spouses. No, not spouses. They weren’t that in here.

He got to his knees before the altar. He was doing this. He expected a twinge of nerves, since he wasn’t going to be in complete control, and yet it was fine. He trusted them, he was ready to put himself in their hands, to let go.

“Maker,” he murmured, “I hope you don’t mind that we’re doing this here. We have the utmost respect for you, and this is just… But you’re all knowing - you understand what this is. I really think I need to do this, to take back my past, used it for something… enjoyable.”

He wasn’t struck by lightning, Andraste’s statue didn’t start bleeding - that probably meant it was alright.

More moments passed in silence, and Cullen started wondering if everything was well. He run a hand through his hair nervously, and was surprised to feel the unruly curls, and not the sleek strands he was used to. That was another important part - his look, his hair the way he had it as a youth. As a templar he couldn’t do anything about them, since vanity was frowned upon, and so he had to deal with his natural hair.

Finally he stopped fidgeting with his hair and just waited. As he was readying to get up and check if something delayed them, the doors fell open. He sighed in relief and at the same time felt a spark of excitement run up his spine.

“Cullen?” Alistair called out to him.

“Yes, I’m here,” he called back, turning around.

“See? I told you we’d find him here,” Alistair told Evelyn.

“Yes, yes, and you’ll collect your winnings on that bet some other night,” she responded impatiently.

“Did you need something?” Cullen asked them.

“Oh yes, several things actually,” Evelyn said. Alistair nodded his agreement. They were both standing next to him now, towering over his kneeling form.

“Can it wait? I was in the middle of prayer,” he responded.

“You pray too much,” Alistair accused.

“And you two don’t pray nearly enough,” Cullen shot back.

“I do spend plenty of time on my knees in dark places - does that count?” Evelyn asked, smirking.
“I know what you two do.”

“Do you now?” Alistair questioned. “I think you may have some vague notions, but knowing the
details could be beneficial to you.”

“I do not need or want to hear about how you fraternize and fornicate,” Cullen responded,
indignantly.

“Alistair, do we fornicate?”

“I wouldn’t say that. Not at all. I’d say we fuck.”

“You should not say such words here,” Cullen chastised him.

“Did we offend your delicate sensibilities?” Alistair asked, teasingly.

“It hardly matters if you’ve offended me. It matters that you offend the Maker. But since you’re here,
and apparently need my help, you should pray first.”

“Alright then.” Evelyn got down on her knees on Cullen’s right side.

“I’m willing to pay that price.” Alistair went to his left and also knelt. “What should we pray for?”

“We can recite the Chant of Light. If there’s something you need to ask forgiveness for, you can do
that.” Cullen looked from Alistair to Evelyn pointedly. “And you can ask for his help and guidance
with a difficult problem.”

“I’m picking option three,” Alistair decided. “Hello, Maker, sir, it’s me, Alistair. I know we haven’t
talked in awhile. I’ve been kinda busy, and I’m sure you’ve had plenty to do as well. Plenty to listen
to. Mostly from that one.” He hiked his thumb at Cullen. “His prayers must get terribly boring and
predictable…”

“What do you think you’re doing?” Cullen interrupted him angrily.

“Shhh.” Alistair pressed a finger to Cullen’s lips. “It’s my prayer - I’m going somewhere with this.”

Cullen shook his head, making Alistair remove his finger, and then gestured for him to go on.

“And speaking of Cullen, I need your help with him,” Alistair continued. “He intends to make a
huge mistake, and I want to stop him. Will you tell us how to go about that?”

“I… I think I hear it!” Evelyn exclaimed. “I think he’s speaking to us. Alistair, can you hear him?”

“I sure can. Can you hear, Cullen?”

“Stop this!” Cullen got up from his knees and looked down at them furiously. “The Maker isn’t
talking to you.”

“He is,” Evelyn insisted.

“Oh, and what is he saying?” Cullen asked mockingly.

“He’s telling us to fraternize with you. To show you what you’ll be denying yourself.”

“What are you… This is…” Cullen stammered.
“We saw your name on the list,” Evelyn said, getting to her feet.

“We know you’re planning on taking that stupid vow,” Alistair added, also getting up.

“It’s not stupid. It proves I love the Maker above myself, that I’m willing to give up everything for him.”

“Do you really think the Maker gets off on seeing people sexually frustrated?” Evelyn asked, looking at him skeptically.

“The Maker doesn’t get off on anything!”

“Then maybe he should!” Alistair interjected.

“This is blasphemy! I’m not going to stand for this,” Cullen made to walk out, but then there were two sets of hands on his arms, stopping him.

“We meant no harm,” Evelyn said in a subdued tone. “Quite the opposite.”

“Why are you suddenly taking an interest in me and my decisions?”

“Because it would’ve been a terrible shame if an attractive man such as yourself denied the world his many charms,” Alistair responded.

Cullen felt himself blushing. This was much more real than he could’ve anticipated.

“You can’t say that!”

“I just did.”

“You’re a man!”

“A very astute observation.”

“This is not right.”

“Oh come now, stop pretending. I see the way you look at me in the baths.”

“I’m not looking at you!” Cullen protested. “We’re all naked, it’s impossible not to see something, but I’m definitely not looking.”

“I think you’re protesting too much,” Evelyn observed. “There’s no point in lying. We’re not judging you. How could I judge you? I’ve seen him in all his glory, and Maker…” She fanned herself with her hands.

“This is not happening,” Cullen muttered. “This is some mad dream.”

“Do you often dream of us trying to seduce you?” Alistair wanted to know.

“What fresh nonsense is this?” Cullen shot back, indignant.

“This makes perfect sense,” Alistair countered.

“Which part?! One, you’re a man, and you’re, as you’ve said, trying to seduce me. Two, you’re a couple, and you’re apparently trying to do this together.”

“I don’t see any problems with this scenario. Desire has no gender. And when two people who are
together want the same thing, there’s nothing wrong with them going after it,” Evelyn said simply.

“I’m not a thing!” Cullen protested.

“Poor phrasing on my part,” Evelyn admitted. “But the rest stands. We both want you. We’ve thought we’d have more time to convince you to join us, but then we saw your name on that list and we had to act quickly.”

“So you accost me in the house of the Maker and proposition me?”

“Seemed like a good idea at the time.” Alistair shrugged.

“This.” Cullen indicated the three of them. “This is not happening. You’re out of your minds.”

“Even if it isn’t…” Alistair started.

“Which it is…” Evelyn interjected quickly.

“Then you still have to ask yourself if this path is right for you,” Alistair told him solemnly. “You can’t take this back. Do you never feel temptation?”

“Haven’t you ever touched yourself?” Evelyn asked, and the look in her eyes clearly indicated she was imagining him doing so.

“I… did,” Cullen confessed, looking at the floor.

“You wouldn’t be able to do even that after taking the vow. Are you certain you can stand it?” Alistair pressed on.

“I haven’t… In a long time…”

“How long?”

“A month.”

“And how does it feel?”

“Awful!” Cullen admitted. “Maker, it’s so hard!”

Evelyn sniggered at his choice of words.

“I bet it is,” she added in a throaty tone.

“It will get easier, it must. I pray and pray, but perhaps that’s not enough. I must train more, meditate more…”

“Or you need to get laid,” Alistair countered.

“This is not a solution!”

“You already have your own doubts, and they will only grow. You’re curious, and that will not subside. You’ll grow to regret making an uninformed choice, not having experienced all that you could,” Alistair told him. “So give us this night…”

“Give yourself this night,” Evelyn corrected. “Allow us to give you a choice.”

Cullen looked from one of them to the other. They moved closer to him, reaching out to take his
hands. The seemingly innocent contact thrilled him. Their fingers were gentle on his hands, touching questioningly.

"Don’t resist what you want,” Evelyn whispered, squeezing his hand.

"We’ll take good care of you,” Alistair murmured at his ear.

“Yes,” Cullen heard himself say.

He expected some unease at the proceedings, but felt none. He wasn’t afraid. He wasn’t overcoming anything. He was ready - he felt safe. He’s felt safe for months, years perhaps. As the young man he pretended to be, he wouldn’t have been able to resist, and as the man he grew up to be, he wasn’t worried about giving into temptation anymore.

“Do what you will with me.”

He had complete trust in them. He was ready to let go, to let them take the lead.

If they were surprised at his quick and absolute acquiescence, they didn’t show it.

“We’ve made such plans for you,” Evelyn all but purred, stepping away from him.

Cullen furrowed his brows in confusion at her movement.

“We’ll play a game. Every time you tell the truth, every time you do something we like, we’ll reward you. Clear enough?” Evelyn asked, unbuttoning her jacket.

Cullen nodded.

“Good.” She undid a few more buttons. “I want you to admit that you want me. That you’ve wanted me for a long time.”

“I do. I did,” Cullen confessed easily, and watched as she threw her jacket to the ground, remaining in an undershirt.

“Good. Now admit that you’ve wanted him too. That you’ve watched him. Watched him strip after practice, his muscles covered in sweat. Watched him as he stepped out of the baths, completely nude, dripping wet, his cock on display. And then you went to your room, waited for the others to fall asleep and touched yourself, imagining it was his big hand on your cock.”

“I…” Cullen stopped, the words hanging unsaid in the air.

Evelyn was holding the edges of her undershirt, bearing only a small patch of skin.

“You’ve never seen her naked,” Alistair told him, “but I have, and believe me, you don’t want her to stop. I’m not just saying this to save my pride.”

Cullen turned to look at him, to really look at him, and for a moment he wondered if it would’ve been easy to admit the truth if someone sympathetic asked him all those years earlier. If he’d met Alistair when they were young, would he have denied the obvious? No, he realized. That was not a face to be denied.

“I did watch you,” he said at last. “I tried not to, but couldn’t help it. I’ve thought of you, of being with you, touching you, having you touch me. I thought you may have watched me back. You did, didn’t you? You liked the fact that I couldn’t stop myself from glancing at you. You acted as if your nakedness was natural, but it was not just you being free - it was you putting on a show for me.”
Alistair grinned.

“It was for you,” he admitted, stepping behind Cullen, grabbing him by the shoulders and turning him towards Evelyn, who was just lifting her undershirt so that her bare breasts showed. Cullen gasped in surprise, expecting something covering her nakedness. “Just like this is for you. It pleased me so much to know you couldn’t keep your eyes from me. I think the lady would like a chance at the same now.”

“I would,” Evelyn confirmed, dropping her shirt to the ground. “Do you like what you see?”

“I do. I want to… I want to touch you.”

“There’ll be plenty of time for that. Now watch. Just watch.”

She pulled the string which was holding her hair in a loose ponytail, and it tumbled free, fanning her face.

Behind him, Alistair moved closer, a solid wall of his body pressing against Cullen’s back, a thick cock rubbing over his ass. Cullen gasped and pushed himself backwards, towards that tantalizing hardness.

“Feels good, doesn’t it?” Evelyn asked, smiling lazily at him.

“Yes,” Cullen responded without a second of hesitation.

Evelyn bent down to undo her boots, her breasts swaying with her movement. The boots were thrown off quickly, and she stretched, making her breasts bounce again, Cullen’s eyes glued to them. He moved a fraction then, testing how far he could push them, but Alistair’s hands on his hips tightened, holding him in place.

“Uh-huh,” he murmured in Cullen’s ear. “You’re not going anywhere until we tell you that you can.”

“If this is all supposedly for my benefit, then why am I not allowed to do as I please?” Cullen asked, straining slightly against the hands which were holding him.

“No-one said it was just for your benefit,” Evelyn responded.

“And besides, we know best. You agreed to trust us, to allow us to do what we see fit,” Alistair added.

Cullen huffed, while inside he was pleased by their responses. He enjoyed the fact that their resolve was strong, that they wanted to see this thing through.

As if to appease him, Alistair moved his hand from Cullen’s hip to his erection, palming it through the laces of his breeches, heavy warm fingers enveloping him.

“For someone who loves rules so much, you can’t keep to them,” Evelyn told him, one brow arched skeptically. “Are you going to continue questioning us?”

“No.” Cullen shook his head vehemently.

“Good.” Evelyn quickly pulled down her light linen pants, remaining in nothing but her smallclothes. Alistair’s fingers pulled on Cullen’s laces quickly, freeing his cock.
“You were right,” Evelyn said with a grin, her eyes focused on Cullen’s straining erection, “definitely worth the wait.”

One of her hands drifted up her side to caress her breast, the other fleetingly pressing between her thighs, the light material of her underwear becoming visibly damp.

Cullen groaned at the sight, the sound stretching out as Alistair took hold of his cock, stroking him and rocking his hips against Cullen’s backside.

“Does that feel good?” Evelyn questioned. “Because, let me tell you, it looks veeery good.”

“Your questions are not very challenging anymore,” Cullen responded, defiantly, canting his hips as Alistair kept jerking him off. “But yes, it does.”

Evelyn quickly shimmied out of her last garment, and moved a few steps closer. Cullen was staring at the glistening curls between her legs, and so at first he couldn’t notice the sardonic expression on her face.

“Too easy for you, are they?” she demanded, reaching out a hand towards him, her palm sneaking under his shirt, pressing flat against his abdomen. “You need a challenge?”

In a flash, her hand was retreating, taking hold of the bottom of his shirt and pulling up. Cullen lifted his arms up, allowing her to strip him. Once the shirt was gone, she traced a criss crossing pattern over his chest and stomach, almost reaching his cock, but then pulling away.

“You haven’t answered,” she chastised.

“Challenge me, if you feel you can,” Cullen shot back.

“Someone’s getting overconfident.” Alistair chuckled, twisting his wrist, forcing a groan out of Cullen.

“Alright. Let me think of something.” Evelyn tapped her index finger against her lips for a moment, before smiling widely. “After you found out we were… fornicating, how long did it take for you to start picturing it, touching yourself as you imagined us together?” Cullen opened his mouth to answer, but Evelyn shook her head, not finished. “What did you think of? I need some descriptions.”

Cullen paused. He tried to think back to all those stories he heard of young Templars fucking each other or their charges in dark alcoves.

“Are you not up to the task?” Alistair asked at his ear, his hand going limp and finally letting go of Cullen’s cock, making him groan in frustration.

“I… I saw you coming out of the pantry together one summer afternoon, a few weeks after you arrived, both your clothes in disarray, your braid a complete mess,” Cullen started, looking at Evelyn. “That very night, when I tried to sleep, I kept imagining what you could’ve been doing there. I was so hard it hurt and there was nothing I could do but to wrap a fist around my cock and get some relief. I pictured you with your chest on some table, legs spread as wide as you could, while he fucked you from behind.”

Evelyn bit her lip, trying to hide a smile.

“Don’t I get a reward for my answer?” Cullen demanded.

Almost before he could finish that sentence, Alistair was letting go of him completely, while Evelyn
moved closer still. She pressed herself fully to him, her naked body almost scorching him, hot and soft, her pebbled nipples dragging against his chest as she went to her toes, now face to face with him. Her open mouth was millimeters from his for a torturous moment before she kissed him. She didn’t start slowly, instead demanding he open to her immediately, overwhelming him. On instinct, his hands went to her hips, which was exactly when she pulled away.

“Nah-ha.” She wagged a finger in front of him. “I didn’t say you could touch me yet.”

“I’m sorry,” Cullen immediately responded. “I’m not going to do it again.”

“We’ve heard that one before.” Alistair clicked his tongue in disapproval. Cullen turned his gaze from Evelyn to the other man, and noticed that his jacket was unbuttoned, revealing a long strip of flesh from throat to groin.

Evelyn strode to him, giving Cullen a good view of her swaying hips and round ass.

“Maybe we should stop? Just give him a show and leave him untouched?” she mused, her hands roaming under Alistair’s jacket.

“Perhaps.” Alistair’s hands moved down the straight line of her spine, making her back arch, before they settled on her backside. Fingers of one of his hands migrated lower still, dipping between her folds, prompting a moan from her.

“No!” Cullen protested. “I swear, I won’t do it again, I…”

“What do you say?” Evelyn asked, turning her head back to look at him.

“Please,” Cullen breathed out. “Please, please, please…” He never begged, was always the one to demand that of them, but now the word was slipping from his lips easily and quickly.

“I can’t deny him when he asks so nicely,” Evelyn decided, parting from Alistair.

Cullen felt like crumbling down in his relief. Logically he knew that they wouldn’t have left him like that, but still this game felt so real that the worry was tangible.

He stood stock still when Evelyn kissed him again, tried not to twitch when her hand found his cock and started stroking.

“Good,” she praised, walking to stand behind him, her hand still on his erection. She must’ve been straining on her toes to be able to whisper into his ear “Now watch him.”

And Cullen did, his eyes glued to Alistair’s form as he let the jacked fall to the floor and stood bare chested and grinning.

“Doesn’t it feel good to be able to look openly, without hiding or pretending?” Alistair asked.

Cullen nodded sharply and felt Evelyn’s mouth moving over the back of his neck, a hint of teeth adding another layer to the sensation.

Alistair took his boots off, then bit his lip thoughtfully.

“If we would’ve been alone in the baths and I’d have made the first move, what would you have let me do? Would you’ve let me touch you? Would you’ve let me suck your cock? Would you’ve reciprocated?”

Those images flashed through Cullen’s mind - the steam rising over the baths, their bodies covered in
droplets of water, slick as they moved together…

“Yes,” he said.

“Yes? Yes to what?” Alistair demanded, nonetheless working the laces of his pants open.

“Ev-everything,” Cullen managed to get out as Evelyn’s gently bit down on his neck, her free hand coming down to play with his sack. Maker, he was so close already.

“That’s quite the change from your initial statements.” Alistair smirked, pushing his breeches down, fully exposing himself. Cullen swallowed, surveying his form, from broad shoulders to muscular calves, his eyes remaining for long moments on his thick cock, standing proudly against the ridges of his stomach.

“I knew he’d come around.” Evelyn laughed lightly at her own choice of words. She moved still closer to him, her breasts pressed to his back, her mouth roaming the expanse of his arms, her hands still on his cock and balls.

“Either his conviction wasn’t that deep or we’re doing quite the job,” Alistair mused, starting to stroke himself languidly. “At this point I don’t care much which it is.”

Cullen could only groan. This was starting to be too much. He needed to touch them and stopping himself from doing so was challenging.

“I’m so close,” he panted harshly. It wasn’t exactly a plea, he wasn’t outright asking for permission, but it was close.

“Good,” Evelyn murmured against his back.

“Come for us,” Alistair encouraged, and Cullen finally allowed himself to let go, the pleasure rushing through him, rocking him, until he was unsteady on his feet.

Luckily Alistair was there to support him, a hand on his arm bracing him. Cullen blinked up at him, feeling a lazy smile stretching his lips.

“Good?” Evelyn asked.

“Great,” Cullen responded, now outright grinning.

Evelyn returned his smile and lifted her hand to her mouth. He watched her, transfixed as she licked a broad stripe over her palm, covered in his spend. She smiled even wider and then wiped the rest of his seed over his breeches carelessly, before sauntering towards the altar.

“You’re still shaking on your feet,” Alistair noticed. “You better kneel.”

He pressed down on Cullen’s shoulders.

“Is it just so that I won’t fall or do you have some other reason?” Cullen asked, smirking and going down on his knees, his face right before Alistair’s hard cock.

“I’m entirely unselfish,” Alistair said, stroking over Cullen’s jaw.

Evelyn laughed from somewhere behind Alistair. Cullen tilted his head to see where she was. The sight of her made him almost choke on his own saliva. She was lying on the altar, propped on her elbows, legs spread wide, her glistening folds clearly visible.
Alistair also turned his head to look at her.

“That’s a goddess worthy of worship,” he said, awe clear in his voice, “and she’ll get her due, but first I need you to make good on that ‘everything’.”

“Can I touch you then?” Cullen asked, his hands practically trembling with his need for contact.

“It wouldn’t work otherwise, now would it?”

That was all the permission Cullen needed. He grabbed Alistair’s cock and started moving his fist, hard and fast, while his other hand mapped his body, fingers digging into the meat of his thigh, thumb brushing over the prominent hip bone, before moving further up, tracing the muscles of his stomach, reaching up to his pectorals, grazing the hardened nipple.

“Slow down,” Alistair told him firmly.

Cullen stopped entirely, his palm flat over Alistair’s chest, his hand tight over his cock, squeezing.

“This is not a race. You are not in your room - you don’t have to finish as quickly as possible, lest your roommates catch you in the act.” Alistair wrapped his hand over Cullen’s and started moving it, slower, more insistent. “Like that.” He let go and allowed Cullen to continue on his own. “But that’s not everything, is it? Is it?” he questioned again when Cullen continued stroking him, his free hand now exploring the muscles of his back.

“No, it isn’t,” Cullen admitted.

“You wouldn’t want to go back on your word, would you?”

Cullen only shook his head and moved closer. He traced his tongue over the contours of Alistair’s stomach, getting progressively lower, before turning to scrape his teeth over that jutting hip bone.

“I should have known you were going to be a terrible tease.” Alistair shook his head, trying for annoyed, but not exactly succeeding. “You know what I want. What I wanted all this time, staying behind in the baths with you when all the others left, walking around naked, hoping you’d at last break and suck my cock instead of just staring at it.”

“And I was always two heartbeats from crawling towards you,” Cullen told him, moving his hand to his backside, squeezing. “Will you come in my mouth?”

“Would you want me to?” Alistair questioned in a low tone.

“I wouldn’t mind,” Cullen responded coyly, his fingers pressing more firmly into Alistair’s ass.

Alistair looked conflicted. He reached out a hand and traced Cullen’s lips with his thumb.

“No,” he said at last, regretful. “Next time. For now we have other plans.”

“We’ll see about that,” Cullen announced, dipping his head down to lick up from the base of Alistair’s cock to the prominent head.

He repeated that motion once, twice, before wrapping his lips around the head and starting to suck.

“Next time,” Alistair insisted, his voice not conveying much authority, sounding breathy and excited.

“Or this time,” Cullen countered, returning to licking the length of him.
For the moment Alistair was silent, only breathing heavily as Cullen alternated between sucking on the tip of his cock and running his tongue over the shaft. When he tasted the first drops of precome, he focused on licking and sucking on the crown, at the same time pumping his fist over what he didn’t encompass with his mouth and squeezing Alistair’s behind, hearing his heavy breathing and sharp gasps, knowing he’d soon be rewarded for his efforts.

“Not yet,” Alistair choked out.

Cullen continued, his tongue at the slit, gathering the drops which were now coming faster.

There was suddenly a sharp pain in his scalp, Alistair yanking on his hair, not gently like he normally did, but with true strength. That was enough to remind Cullen of the rules, and he let go, sitting down on his hunches.

“If only you were such a rule breaker when it came to stupid Chantry regulations,” Alistair told him, glaring, his pupils blown, cheeks heated. “What do you say?”

“You’re welcome?” Cullen smirked. “Auch,” he hissed when Alistair pulled on his hair, tilting his head back. His first instinct was to keep resisting, but that was not the point. He agreed to this, wanted to let go, to for once try not being in charge. “I’m sorry,” he said at last, and breathed out when the pressure in his scalp lessened.

“How sorry?”

There was a biting remark at the tip of his tongue, but he restrained himself.

“I’m ever so sorry. My honest apologies,” he said, trying for an earnest tone.

Alistair was opening his mouth, but Evelyn cut in.

“I think that’s enough. He just got carried away. Perfectly understandable under the circumstances, I’d say. Kiss and make up.”

At her words Alistair’s demeanor changed almost in an instant. He offered Cullen a hand, pulled him up and crushed their mouths together. He was tasting himself on Cullen’s lips, which was a pleasant thought. Cullen wanted to deepen the kiss and tried grabbing the back of his neck, which was precisely when Alistair pulled away.

When he stepped away, Cullen saw Evelyn, sprawled on the altar, smiling dangerously. He didn’t have the time to miss Alistair’s mouth, instantly focused on the vision before his eyes.

Evelyn crooked her finger, beckoning him, and he went to her.

“Back on your knees,” she ordered when he stood between her open legs, and this time Cullen did not hesitate. Her demand was perfectly in line with his own wishes. He placed his hands on her thighs and lowered himself to the ground, his face level with her quim. “When I tell you to stop you will.” It was not a question, but Cullen nodded. “You have some idea as to what you should do?”

Cullen felt a flash of indignation, and quelled it quickly. He shouldn’t know.

“I know what I want to do,” he said.

“Let’s test your instincts then,” Evelyn said.

As soon as her last words were out, he dove in, licking between her legs, not focusing on any
particular spot, laving her folds in broad strokes.

“Up,” she ordered after a few moments, and knocked his side lightly with her heel when he didn’t comply instantly. “Slowly,” she added, as Cullen started rising to his feet, trying not to glare at her. “We’ll have to work on your precision.”

“No-one starts perfect,” Alistair offered. “He obeyed you quicker than he did me. I don’t know if I shouldn’t be offended, but you could reward him.”

“I suppose,” Evelyn agreed. “What is it that you’d like?”

Without hesitation, Cullen reached out to touch her breasts.

“Slowly,” Evelyn said, and Cullen lowered his hands, placing them on her stomach and inching them towards her breasts.

When she smiled, he lowered his head to her skin, and followed the path of his fingers with his lips. Evelyn made a satisfied moan when his hand reached her breasts, playing with the nipples, before cupping them fully. He let go of the right breasts when his mouth reached the underside, and licked a path over the curve of it to the tip of the nipple. He swirled his tongue over it, watching it glisten with his saliva, before sucking on it. Evelyn’s hands were running over his arms and back now, nails scratching gently as she hummed her approval.

Cullen was moving to her other breast, his tongue tracing her sternum, when he felt pressure at his back. Alistair apparently wanted to join in. Cullen wondered if he was going to fuck him, his cock throbbing at the thought.

“Don’t stop,” Alistair and Evelyn said almost simultaneously, and so Cullen continued, reaching her other breast and licking at the tip. He didn’t know what was going to happen, and that was alright.

“Let’s work on that precision,” Alistair whispered at his ear, taking hold of Cullen’s hand and moving it down, between Evelyn’s legs, and at the same time pressing himself to his body, his cock against Cullen’s behind, rubbing.

“Did you like the taste of her?” Alistair asked.

Cullen nodded against Evelyn’s breast, letting Alistair guide his hand, enjoying the warm wetness under his fingers.

“There - you’ll lick her there the next time. And you’ll keep touching her there as you fuck her,” Alistair told him when Cullen’s finger circled Evelyn’s nub.

“May I?” Cullen asked, looking up at her face, not feigning the true enthusiasm he felt.

“How polite.” Alistair’s warm chuckle rasped against his ear.

“In denying you I’d be denying myself, and I can’t stand that anymore, so yes, you may,” Evelyn allowed.

Cullen reached for her hip to pull her closer to the edge, to where his cock strained, ready to be inside her. Alistair let go of his hand between Evelyn’s legs, and helped him, holding her other hip, moving her towards them. When she was in the right position, her backside nearly hanging over the edge of the altar, Alistair instead took hold of Cullen’s cock and guided it into her, first brushing the head between her slick folds, then, after both Cullen and Evelyn whined, he mercifully allowed Cullen to sink in.
“Could you ever give this up?” Alistair asked.

“No,” Cullen responded without hesitation, finally buried to the hilt, resting, enjoying the soft warmth enveloping him.

“Neither would I,” Evelyn added, smiling.

Cullen almost bend down to kiss her, but then he felt Alistair moving away slightly, before repositioning himself, his cock slipping between Cullen’s thighs. That was certainly novel.

“I’m not going to fuck you. Yet. You’re not ready,” Alistair announced. “But I’m not going to just stand idly by.” Punctuating his words, he started moving, his cock dragging between Cullen’s thighs, the sensation rather pleasing, but not as much as the idea that Alistair was taking his pleasure from him even in this simple way.

“You are supposed to be fucking me,” Evelyn said, bringing Cullen’s attention back to her. “Don’t hold back.” She bit her nails into his shoulder, spurring him on.

“As you command,” Cullen responded, before starting to fuck her in earnest.

He held her in place with one hand as he pounded into her with abandon, hard and fast, barely feeling as her nails dug into his flesh. Evelyn gripped the side of the altar with her other hand, as her muscles strained under his onslaught.

“That’s it,” Alistair encouraged, moving behind him, hands on Cullen’s sides.

“You’re not so… so propper, are you?” Evelyn panted.

“No.” Cullen gave her a particularly sharp thrust.

“You love this. Love fucking two people, here in the house of the Maker,” Alistair added, the lewd smile evident in his voice.

Cullen felt himself getting precariously closer to the edge. This was wrong, so wrong, and there was something so exciting in that, in flaunting all rules.

“I do,” he said. “I do, I do.”

His movements were completely erratic, but neither of his partners seemed to mind, Evelyn trying to meet his thrusts, Alistair holding him tight and pistoning between his thighs.

“Aren’t you glad you agreed… agreed to do what we want?” Alistair prodded between gasping breaths.

“Yes yesyesyes…” Cullen chanted.

“What do you say?” Evelyn prompted.

“Thank you,” Cullen responded immediately. “I’m so close,” he added, feeling himself hovering over the edge.

“Not yet,” Evelyn panted.

Not doing what she wanted was not an option. Cullen continued fucking her, as her voice rose higher and higher, just like Alistair’s did behind him.
At last Alistair came, biting into Cullen’s neck to keep quiet, his release warm on Cullen’s thighs, and it all but destroyed Cullen’s composure.

“Please,” Cullen breathed out. He was not used to being this out of control, having to claw for the remnants of it.

He didn’t know if it was his broken plea or just the continued physical sensations, but Evelyn reached her end with a long moan, muffled with her own hand which she pressed to her mouth, her inner walls gripping him. He burned with the need for release, but couldn’t allow himself to reach it, not before Evelyn allowed it.

“Come,” she finally said, looking up at him with eyes glazed with pleasure, and Cullen felt his body immediately responding, letting go.

His climax rushed through him, overwhelming and all encompassing. He bit the palm covering his mouth, keeping him from shouting out.

When the sensations subsided, he slumped forward, over Evelyn who started stroking his hair. Her touch and the feeling of her under him was soothing, but he needed to sit, his legs somewhat unsteady. Alistair helped him as he pushed up and maneuvered himself to the ground. Evelyn soon followed, jumping from the altar and settling next to Cullen, rubbing his back.

“How do you feel?” she asked.

“I’m… good. Very good.” Cullen smiled. “This was very different.”

“Good different, I take it?” Alistair inquired.

“Yes. Good different. I’m not saying this will become my new normal, but that was very… illuminating. There are layers to this. I like my control, but in wanting to give it up, I felt like I still retained it, somehow. It was mine to give. Perhaps before I couldn’t give it up because I didn’t feel I fully had it. If that makes any sense.” He shrugged. His words were tangled, but his feelings were calm.

“I think I understand,” Evelyn said. “You always fought for control and were afraid of losing it, of it being taken away. Now you know you fully poses it, you’re in control of yourself and the situation, and if you give a bit of your control up, more won’t be stolen from you.”

“That’s it. My wise queen.” Cullen kissed the top of her head. “I’m glad I did that. I trust you both implicitly, and now I proved it.”

“You never needed to prove anything to us,” Alistair told him. “We always knew. We always accepted you.”

“I know. And I love you for that. Among other reasons.” He pressed his lips to Alistair’s quickly. “But I think it was myself I needed to convince.”

“Now that you did, something tells me you’ll be more… commanding than usual,” Evelyn mused, the corner of her mouth quirking up.

“Do you mind?” Cullen asked, knowing the answer before both his lovers responded with a decisive “No!”

“That settles it then.” He grinned at them. That was a pleasant change, but he was eager to get back to being the one giving orders. After they all had a proper rest.
“Now let’s get up from those cold stones. My arse is getting frozen,” Alistair informed them, standing up and stretching.

“Let’s. We’ve already been here very long. People may wonder what we’re doing,” Evelyn offered, also rising.

“It’s very simple - I’m serving the Maker and my King and Queen, just like I vowed,” Cullen responded with a grin.

Chapter End Notes

I'm about to jump head first into AC Odyssey, so I'm posting this chapter before I'm completely consumed by the game.

In accordance to the jizz peach principle, which I've explained in one of my other notes, I'm not apologizing for this chapter, and I'm not ashamed. Ok, I'm a tiny bit ashamed, but much less so than I would've normally been, so I count it as personal growth, such as it is.

All this Chantry stuff really takes me back to my roots. It was the beginning of 2015, and I was just getting into DA, but it was clear that it was going to be my new obsession. "Take me to church" by Hozier was super popular and I was listening to it on repeat, and it sort of triggered the very first fic idea I've had - a Chantry blowjob. I've written and posted a few things before I got around to that story, which I oh so subtly called "Oh Creator see me kneel", but that was my first idea. I remember reading through the Chant of Transfiguration and smirking to myself, thinking about making the lines dirty. Good times. If you're interested, you can check that out here.

Next chapter will be more wholesome, but of course no too wholesome. To get to the wholesome bits there has to be some unwholesomeness. Some of you already guessed where this is headed.

I'm ending this rambling. If you can, leave a comment or kudos. I'd would mean a lot to me.
The words slipped out of Evelyn’s mouth suddenly, almost without her meaning to say them. The three of them were having a pleasant afternoon tea in their sitting room, when she just blurted them out.

It wasn’t as if the thought was new to her. She’s been thinking about it more and more for the past few months. She always knew that one day she was going to be a mother, but the time didn’t seem right before – there was always so much to do. She wasn’t ready, that was the plain truth of it, and she didn’t want to embark on such a serious task as having a child without being absolutely certain it was the right decision.

As far as nobles and Chantry sisters were concerned, she should’ve gotten pregnant on her wedding night, and delivered an heir to the throne, but she wasn’t going to bend to their wishes in that. So much of her life was already dictated by them, that she wanted to keep this decision as her own.

Now she knew – she was ready. She wanted it, so much. She was smiling at every mother she saw, eager to play with their children, imagining herself in that position, holding her own baby. Yes, this was her time to become a mother.

The desire to share her wish with her husbands has been bubbling in her for some time, and now it just slipped out. Having a child wasn’t just her decision – they’d have to agree with her, but somehow she was certain they were going to be as eager as she was.

“Alright. Shall we get to it then?” Alistair asked, smiling over the rim of his teacup.

“Just like that?” Evelyn demanded.

“Just like that. We’ve gone through the motions a time or two, I think we’ll manage.”

Evelyn laughed, relieved. It was one thing to expect them to agree, and another to hear the enthusiastic consent.

“I’m afraid I’ve taken my potion this morning. I didn’t know then that I was going to be saying this to you. But tomorrow we can start.”

“We can have a rehearsal tonight and tomorrow morning the real work begins.”

Evelyn grinned at Alistair, but from the corner of her eye, she saw that Cullen wasn’t sharing in their excitement.

“What is it, love?” she asked him. Did he not want to have a child just yet? She’d respect his choice, if he couldn’t be convinced otherwise, but it would surprise her greatly – he was wonderful with children and seemed to genuinely enjoy spending time with them. Why wouldn’t he want a child of his own?

“We should talk about the… logistics of it first, don’t you think?” he offered tentatively.
“It’s rather simple, I think. I’ve never known you to be uncertain as to how to go about the whole thing.” Alistair told him, smirking.

“You know it’s not that,” Cullen responded seriously. “I want to be with you, to be a part of this, but we must make certain I’m not the one who impregnates Evelyn.”

“Must we?” Alistair asked.

“But of course!” Cullen seemed shocked that it was even a question.

Listening to their exchange, Evelyn realized that she hasn’t thought about that aspect. They were going to have a baby, she was going to give birth to it – it was very simple in her mind, since she was the only person who could bear a child. The question of paternity never entered her mind, which she now found rather strange.

“Don’t you want to be a father?” Alistair demanded.

“Of course I do!” Cullen sounded slightly offended. “I’ll be one regardless, but we’re not just having a child. We’re having a future king or queen. Shouldn’t they have your blood?”

“Should they?” Alistair lifted one eyebrow.

Cullen sighed in exasperation.

“Of course they should. They must. You must continue your line.”

Alistair opened his mouth, closed it.

“I was going to ask another question like the previous ones, but I don’t want to anger you,” he explained. “Quite frankly, I don’t give a fig about the line, house Therein and the rest of the nonsense. The kingdom will get an exceptional ruler if you’ll be his or her father, and the rest shouldn’t matter to them.”

Cullen gaped at his husband for a few moments.

“Alistair, you can’t believe that. It does matter.”

“It only matters if we let it matter. It’s all foolish. How many kings and queens throughout history have been children of horse masters, gardeners, cooks, landless knights, Chantry brothers, Templars and such? We can never know, because they’re as good as the ones that come from the purest lines. I’m a bastard son of a king and some nameless woman, and I think I’m not doing an entirely terrible job of it.”

Alistair tried to sound almost flippant, but Evelyn felt the strain in his voice when he mentioned the mother he never knew. For a time he thought he knew who gave birth to him, going so far as to visit her daughter while he traveled with Fergus Cousland, but as time went by and more information surfaced, Alistair realized he’s been deceived, and his mother’s identity again became a mystery.

Cullen remained silent, regarding Alistair carefully.

“You know I’m right,” Alistair smiled. “You have no love for nobility. You know my illustrious line won’t guarantee an excellent ruler. Just look at my brother.”

“I will concede that point, but there is another matter – if the child looks like me, there will be trouble.”
Now Alistair kept quiet for a moment.

“I’m the one with red hair – if you were the ginger and the child was born with red hair then we’d be in a very difficult position, but as it stands I hardly think it could be very obvious. The child can just as well take after Evelyn. Isn’t that right, dear?” He turned to Evelyn for confirmation.

“I certainly hope to see myself in our child,” she responded somewhat noncommittally.

She felt foolish for not thinking of such details earlier, too focused on daydreams of idyllic family afternoons at the beach and the sound of a child’s laugh ringing through the palace gardens. She wanted a child, and which one of her husbands fathered it mattered little to her, but the issue of appearances was important at court, and so Cullen’s point was valid. Still, Alistair also made a good case. Evelyn felt torn, and a bit guilty – it was so easy for her, since she was certainly going to be the mother.

“We can’t be certain how our child will look, so we shouldn’t take chances,” Cullen insisted.

“All we’ve been doing is taking chances. We should take a chance in this as well. Fate hasn’t steered us wrong yet. If I’m to be the father by blood, then it will happen, and if you are, then that’s what’s going to happen,” Alistair countered.

Cullen appeared to be thinking that over.

“The Maker brought us together, watching over us all this time, but I’m not certain we should demand that He intervene in this as well,” he finally responded.

Evelyn wasn’t certain she believed in fate or the Maker, but if that was going to allow Alistair and Cullen to make a decision, then she wasn’t going to say anything.

“We wouldn’t be demanding anything. If He sees fit to intervene, then so be it, but if He doesn’t, then it means I’m correct and it all hardly matters,” Alistair reasoned.

“Why are you so determined to not make certain you’ll be the father of our child?” Cullen wanted to know. It was a good question, and Evelyn also waited for the answer.

“So much of what we do is dictated not by who we are and what we want, but by what we are – by our roles as king, queen and commander. If we were just three people, we’d already be in bed, making love, but as it stands we’re debating. I don’t want that. I know you’ll say it’s irrational and foolish, but I don’t want to have this stolen from us. I don’t want to bring forth an heir to the throne of Ferelden. I want to have a child, our child. Let’s make a baby and not care about the rest.”

Evelyn understood him perfectly. She didn’t want the time of her becoming a mother to be dictated by others, and this should also be their choice. It was a bit risky, but haven’t they already proven that their risks always paid off?

Cullen looked like he was contemplating the matter deeply, then something struck him.

“We haven’t asked your opinion!” he exclaimed, turning to Evelyn. “That is a terrible oversight. It is our child and your voice matters most – you’ll be the one carrying it.”

Evelyn took a breath.

“Will it be very awful if I say that I have no strong opinion? I love you both so much, and I’d be happy to have a child with either of you. I see both of your points and it’s hard for me to decide. I know it’s not helpful…” She trailed off. There should be a ‘but’ at the end of the sentence, yet
Evelyn couldn’t find anything to say.

“That sounds like you’re on my side,” Alistair declared.

“I didn’t exactly say that…”

“Well, the way I see it, none of us cares who’ll father our child, and only Cullen has very strong feelings about the danger of this entire thing being potentially discovered,” Alistair summarized. It looked like he was done, but then he suddenly grinned. “No one knows my mother!” he exclaimed excitedly. It seemed a strange change from his previous sadness at the fact, but then he continued. “She could look like anyone. She could have curly hair or amber eyes or just about any trait neither I nor Evelyn poses. It would be so easy to explain!"

He looked quite proud of himself, and Evelyn admitted there was sound logic behind his words. Cullen appeared to be thinking it over once more, seemingly at a loss for a counter argument.

“Alright.” He sighed. “You win. We will do it your way.”

Alistair grinned triumphantly

“Shall we shake on in it?” he suggested.

“I think there’s a better way to seal that agreement.”

Evelyn grinned, getting up from the couch, leaving the cold tea unfinished. She offered her husbands her hands, and they took it. That afternoon they committed to their plan, and the next day they started trying in earnest.

When her blood came at the end of the first month, Evelyn was somewhat disappointed, but she accepted it. She knew her family was very fertile, and some of her cousins joked that all it took for them to get with child was too long a look from their husband, but still, not conceiving after just a month didn’t seem troubling.

When her blood came after the second month, Evelyn was rather shocked. She thought that it was surely going to happen. Her mother already had three children at her age, Maxwell having been born exactly nine months after their parents wedded. Her sister delivered a healthy boy, her fourth child, just the previous year. Evelyn didn’t wish to have such a large family, but it seemed her closest relations had no problem bearing children, so why did she? She tried to calm herself, to not worry, as that was said to be counterproductive, but still she didn’t feel well when she had to tell her husbands for the second time that she did not conceive. They didn’t seem worried, only caring about her foul mood, but still she felt like she was letting them down.

When her blood came after the third month, Evelyn couldn’t help it – she started sobbing. Her emotions were always heightened when her monthly cycle came into that phase, but she always did her best to restrain herself, not liking the feeling of some strange power within her forcing anger or sadness from her, but this time she couldn’t be strong. She felt the telltale signs which meant she was going to be bleeding soon, but tried to tell herself it wasn’t so. When she saw the crimson proof of her failure, she wept bitterly.

After cleaning herself, she retreaded to one of her smaller sitting rooms, and allowed herself to cry without restraint. The pain in her lower back was a constant throbbing reminder of her weakness.
Lady Antonia found Evelyn in that pitiful state and immediately rushed to her side.

“What is it Evelyn, what’s happened?” she asked, placing her warm comforting hands on Evelyn’s shaking shoulders. Evelyn was once more glad she demanded her ladies call her by name – she didn’t feel like a queen in that moment, and didn’t want the added burden of thinking she was not performing that duty correctly as well.

“Oh, Antonia, I… my…” Evelyn couldn’t get the words out. She allowed her lady to hold her, before gathering her strength. “There’s no baby,” she finally said, sounding small and hopeless.

“I’m so sorry. I didn’t know you were trying for one,” Antonia said in a soft voice.

“We are. But it’s not working! It’s been three months.” Evelyn wiped at her eyes, trying not to start crying again.

“I know it must hurt, but three months isn’t that long. Some women wait much longer than that.”

“I know, but Trevelyan women get pregnant at a drop of a hat. No one in my family had any problems. I’m the only failure!”

“You’re not a failure, you’re not,” Antonia insisted, looking Evelyn right in the face, sounding perfectly certain.

“If I can’t bear a child…”

“Don’t say that. Don’t give up.”

“If there’s a problem, it is with me, it must be. There’s no other option since…” Evelyn stopped herself before saying anything more, but then she noticed Antonia biting her lip.

“Begging your pardon, I know.”

Evelyn felt her eyes go wide.

“I’ve known for a while now. And I’d never say anything. Not because Lady Leliana would tell my husband about my lover. I love you and king Alistair, and I deeply respect commander Cullen – I’d never do anything to hurt you.”

Evelyn believed her. She grew to care deeply for her ladies and knew they were devoted to her, Antonia especially. Still, it was a bit disconcerting to know the truth was getting out.

“How did you find out?” For a moment all thoughts of her failure in the childbearing department were replaced with thoughts of her failure in the secret keeping department.

“I have almost completely free reign of your chambers and you’re not as guarded around me as others, and so I’ve heard some words exchanged, seen glimpses of things. I’m rather perceptive, if I do say so myself.” Antonia shrugged.

“Does anybody else knows?” Evelyn pressed on.

“Lady Joanna is old and hard of hearing, but she’s a very shrewd woman. She noticed me looking between the three of you one day and told me she also thinks you are involved. She’s confided in me that in her time she indulged a bit in the pleasures of the flesh, and she’d never judge you. Lady Patricia also noticed some things. She and I were friends before we became your ladies in waiting and so we discussed the matter. The others know nothing, I’m sure. Lady Florence and Lady Tamar
are too wrapped up in each other to notice much else. Young love.” Antonia sighed fondly. “Lady Gwendolyn is naïve beyond measure. She’d never be able to imagine such a thing could be possible. Lady Luisa is also in the dark, and I, Patricia and Lady Joanna make sure she remains that way. She’s the only one I don’t trust. Loghain supporters.” Antonia made a disgusted face. If she were anyone but a fine lady, she’d likely spit on the ground. “You have nothing to worry about from us. We will protect you.”

The words touched Evelyn. It felt so good to have people care for her, have actual friends she could confide in.

“I’ll try not to worry. But since we’re on the subject, I feel like clarifying – you said Lady Joanna enjoyed pleasures of the flesh, but this is not just that. We’ve been together for a long time before we married, and we love each other.” It felt very important that she explain it. If her secret was out, then she wanted her closest confidant to understand it completely.

“Oh, I had no doubt. It’s evident you care for each other.”

Evelyn smiled, but then winced as the pain in her back intensified.

“I don’t want to let them down,” she whispered.

“You won’t. It will be alright. You’ll be cradling a babe to your breast in no time.”

Evelyn wanted to believe her, wanted it so badly.

“I know I shouldn’t dwell on that, but I can’t help wondering what is wrong. It’s not for a lack of trying. We… It’s…”

“I understand.” Antonia nodded, trying to suppress a smile, which caused Evelyn to laugh.

“I would’ve never guessed I’d be talking to anyone in the palace about that sort of thing.” It was a bit awkward and embarrassing, and yet something of a relief.

“If it will make you feel better, I can share a secret of my own,” Antonia suggested. “I’m in love,” she continued after Evelyn gave her an encouraging smile, “with Ser Gavin. I know he has no lands but he’s the most wonderful man I’ve ever met. He makes me laugh, brings me flowers and holds me in his arms like I’m the greatest treasure he’s ever beheld. And he’s willing to wait. My husband is very old, as you know, and as soon as he’s dead, I’ll marry Gavin. My father will be furious, no doubt, but after having to live with that doddering fool and not even having the pleasure of running his business ventures, I deserve something good.”

That certainly made sense. Antonia did talk about the knight quite often, and when they were in the same room they were constantly close. Evelyn smiled. She was glad for her friend.

“You deserve the best,” she told her. “I will support your marriage. Cullen sees potential in your beloved – I know because he’s mentioned him on numerous occasion. His star is on the rise. You two will be comfortable.”

“Thank you. I’m very glad to hear that. Now I just have to be patient. Patricia offered me her help, but I declined. I don’t care for my husband, but he never hurt me or anyone in our household, unlike those two cads Patricia was married to before she found her current husband. I don’t think my husband deserves to be killed, but I won’t shed a tear at his passing.”

“Understandable. But you said that two of Patricia’s husbands were cruel. Why did she get rid of the third then?” Leliana told Evelyn all about Lady Patricia’s history with men, but despite that Evelyn
liked the woman. She believed that Patricia must’ve had a good reason for doing what she did to her husbands, if indeed she was responsible for their demise, but Evelyn never broached the subject.

“Oh, the first one was a pleasant enough person, but he had a tragic riding accident. No one’s fault. Patricia was saddened to have lost him, and even more saddened to be married off again to someone decidedly not pleasant.”

Evelyn wasn’t proud of that fact, but she loved gossip, and the exchange allowed her to take her mind off of her predicament, even if for a moment. Just as she thought about that, her mind turned back to her troubles.

“You will be fine,” Antonia insisted, evidently noticing Evelyn’s mood shifting. “It was just not your time. You are not to blame. The stars don’t always align, that’s all. But they will, and then your perfect child will come to you. For now relax and think positively. A good cup of tea with something stronger will no doubt do you some good.”

Evelyn nodded. A nice tea sounded just right. She wasn’t sure about everything else, still feeling disappointed in herself, betrayed by her own body, but Antonia was right. She had to keep the faith. As soon as her blood stopped, they’d try again, and again, and again.

The tea did make her feel better, as did Antonia’s constant company and light conversation. She was indeed a treasure, and not just for Ser Gavin.

When it came time for supper, Evelyn was almost completely calm and able to tell her husbands that she was once more not with child without breaking down. They held her close, sweet and understanding, not showing any signs of annoyance. Things were fine, she was fine, or she was going to be. She had to have hope, and with such loyal husbands and friends it was going to be easier.

Evelyn was distracted. There were expense reports strewn on her desk, but she couldn’t make herself focus on them, the figures blurring before her eyes. There was only one thing on her mind. The night couldn’t come soon enough. Could she perhaps convince her husbands to sneak away to their chamber after lunch? No, that was out of the question.

In just a few short weeks nobility from all over Ferelden was going to descend on the palace. They’ve instituted those consultation sessions, to be held every six months, rather recently. That was to be the second time it took place. There were some rumblings about troubles in the Arling of West Hills, on the border with Orlais, and it was of paramount importance that they were discussed. Everything had to be perfect, and they still had so many things to do. Which was why it was so wrong that she kept thinking about how much she needed to come.

Normally she wouldn’t be berating herself for such thoughts. Instead she’d find Cullen and Alistair and do something about it, preferably several things. But this was not a normal day - they all needed to be productive and not waste time.

Perhaps that was what exacerbated the situation. It’s been a bit less than two weeks since her blood stopped, but they couldn’t be intimate as often as they’d wish. Their meetings were running late into the night, and then they ended up tired and very much not in the mood. They were trying to have a child, but it somehow felt wrong to be forcing themselves into an act which should be full of joy, doing it mechanically, with only one goal in mind.
Evelyn drummed her fingers over the desk. She wasn’t getting anything done as it was. Her hand drifted to her thigh, her fingers slowly rolling up the material of her skirt. That was the most logical solution to the problem - she could take the edge off herself and then return to work. First she should lock the doors, but that would require that she got up and remove her hand from her leg, and that sounded terrible. Her fingers were higher up, digging into her thigh…

“Your Majesty…”

Evelyn yelped. That was so very undignified. Queens did not yelp. Queens did not try to pleasure themselves in their offices, but that was besides the point. She placed both palms flat on the desk.

“A thousand pardons for having startled you, Your Majesty.” The servant who interrupted her looked very contrite. “I should have knocked before entering, but the king asked me to fetch you. Urgently.”

“That’s quite alright. Let’s go.”

Following the servant, Evelyn left the room. She should’ve been embarrassed by almost being caught in the act by the servant, but instead she felt a stab of worry. What could be so important that the servant has forgone the protocol?

Once they reached Alistair’s office, Cullen was already there, and so was a young woman in traveling leathers. She looked tired and disheveled.

“This is Annette, Empress Celene’s most trusted… messenger,” Alistair announced, once the servant was gone. Evelyn understood that ‘messenger’ most likely meant ‘spy’. “Tell the queen and commander what you told me,” he prompted. “Without all the polite phrases and embellishments.”

The girl gave a shallow bow.

“Your Majesty and the Commander must be both aware of the situation in the arling of West Hill.” Evelyn and Cullen nodded. “It is much worse than we previously thought. There were some thefts across the border, houses being burned down by unidentified culprits, small skirmishes between unimportant knights, with the nobility suspected of perhaps not endorsing, but at least not condemning the actions either. Over the months the unrest has been growing, and now it’s threatening to reach a boiling point. The son and heir of the arl of West Hill and the daughter and heiress of the Lady Genevieve de la Rochelle are missing.

“Their parents both claim that the heir of the other abducted their child. We could not find out the truth. It is as likely that Ser Quentin abducted Lady Giselle as the other way around. Or perhaps one of the parents did it, and is also keeping their own child secreted away, trying to throw off suspicion from themselves, while at the same time stoking resentment. One of their vassals could be doing it, with or without their permission. We also can’t discount the possibility that outside agents are trying to force conflict between our two nations. My Lady does not blame you for the actions of your subjects, and hopes you do not blame her for the actions of hers. She wishes to settle the matter peacefully, in cooperation with you.

“Before things got out of hand, she wished to invite you to spend a few weeks of summer in her estate by the border, meet with her, as well as with Fereldan and Orlessian nobles, and smooth things over. Now it is much more urgent. My Lady is aware that your nobility arrives in a fortnight at the palace, but she asks that one of the Royal Highnesses, as well as commander Cullen come as quickly as possible. She is already on her way.”

Evelyn was trying to process everything, when Cullen spoke up.
“Why does the Empress wish to see me there? The Arl of West Hills is not a fan of mine. Wouldn’t my presence only cause more strife?”

That was a good point. The Arl took an instant dislike to Cullen the moment they first met when Alistair threw the masked ball.

“You, Ser, are a favorite of his second son, Benedict, who, with his older brother missing, stands to become the Arl’s heir. The Arlessa does have a fondness for you too,” the spy explained.

Cullen nodded. It’s been months since young Benedict left Denerim, but Evelyn remembered how often the boy trained with Cullen, practically worshiping the ground the commander walked on. He was said to be shy, and his mother was glad to see him be more outgoing, spending time with other young men Cullen took under his wing. Perhaps the spy was right and they could be swayed by Cullen and in turn exert some influence over the Arl.

“We have to discuss the matter privately. A servant will find a chamber for you to rest. You must be very tired,” Evelyn told the girl.

“Most kind of you, Your Majesty.” The spy bowed, a bit deeper this time, and left.

“Fucking Arl Randolph!” Alistair all but shouted. “Can this idiot do something right for once in his miserable life and die at last?! He was said to be in poor health for the longest time now. Does he truly want to pull us into a war before dying? I never thought I was going to say that, but thank the Maker for Celene. And thank you, Evelyn,” he added, in a much calmer tone. “You made the right choice saving her life. I’m not sure how Gaspard would’ve acted in that situation.”

Evelyn took hold of his hands.

“We will deal with it, there’s no doubt,” she promised, trying to project more confidence than she felt. The situation did sound perilous. “Maybe Florence, one of my ladies in waiting, could go with you. She’s his daughter, and perhaps could talk some sense into him?”

Florence would no doubt do anything in her power to help Evelyn’s cause. Becoming a lady in waiting to the queen saved her from an unhappy marriage, and made her parents look at her more favourably.

“That’s a very good idea,” Cullen declared. “When the two missing heirs are found, she could persuade her brother to either stop the hostilities or forgive the wrongs done to him. You did say he doted on her, didn’t you?”

“Yes. They are very close and he values her council,” Evelyn confirmed. “Do you truly think Ser Quentin or Lady Giselle could be responsible? I could believe it of her, but Ser Quentin? I’ve met him, and he made a very favorable impression on me. Not to mention that from Florence’s tales, he sounds like a very reasonable and peace loving man.”

Alistair sighed and threw himself on a chaise longue dramatically.

“This is giving me a headache.”

“We will sort it out, do not worry,” Cullen said in his calmest voice, walking up to Alistair and stroking his hair affectionately.

“I hope it’s one of them, or their parents, because then either we or Celene can try and bring them to heel, without having to deal with some Tevene spies or Qunari fanatics, and the repercussions coming with that,” Alistair decided.
“On the other hand, if outside agents were working against us, neither of our countries would be seen as being at fault, and dealing with the threat together could strengthen our relationship,” Evelyn mused.

Alistair sighed in an even more dramatic fashion.

“Agonizing over that now won’t help,” Cullen supplied. “I’m coming, that’s decided, and so is Lady Florence, but which one of you will join us?”

Evelyn smiled. Straight to the point, no useless theorising - that was how Cullen acted, and that was exactly what they needed at the moment.

“I think the two of you should go,” Evelyn suggested. “For one, the Arl is very old fashioned, and I don’t think he would respect my authority as much as yours, Alistair. For another, I’ve had time alone with both of you, so I think now it’s your turn to get a few weeks together, while I stay behind and pine.”

“You won’t mind dealing with the banns alone?” Alistair asked.

“I’ll be fine. I’m still the popular young queen - they will not try and antagonize me, I’m sure, especially seeing as you will be dealing with Arl Randolph. I can see only one or two of them wishing for our relations with Orlais to worsen - the rest enjoy peace and prosperity.”

“You will perform admirably,” Cullen assured.

“Of course she will,” Alistair said. “That was never in doubt. It’s just such a nuisance. I’ve been doing this alone for years, and I hated it every time. I wouldn’t wish to force you into that situation.”

Evelyn smiled. Their unflinching confidence in her was touching.

“That’s sweet of you, but I truly don’t mind.”

At one time she would’ve been worried about being alone with the banns. When leaving Skyhold to start a new life, she was terribly afraid that she was not going to make a good queen. Now she knew she could face the nobility. It would’ve been infinitely better to have her husbands with her, but she’s already proven her abilities to the bannon and to herself, and so she felt no fear, only a pang of sorrow at the thought of missing the men she loved.

“That’s settled, then. We need to prepare for our departure,” Cullen announced.

“On the morrow?” Alistair asked.

Cullen nodded.

“What is it, Evelyn?” he demanded, probably noticing how she pursed her lips in discontentment.

“It’s just…” She took a breath. She was going to sound selfish, but she couldn’t not say it. “We have to spend the night together. I want you to take me like your life depended on it. All day I’ve thought of nothing else, and now I can’t let you leave without it. You will be tired tomorrow, but I need you ever so badly.”

“I won’t mind being tired, will you Cullen?”

“Not in the slightest.”

They both looked at her with heat in their eyes, and Evelyn was near trembling.
“Perhaps we can take a small break…” Alistair started.

“No,” Evelyn and Cullen said almost at the same time.

“If we start now, I won’t let you go, and nothing will get done,” Evelyn explained.

“We can’t get distracted,” Cullen agreed.

Alistair rolled his eyes.

“I know you’re right, but I very much don’t like that fact.”

“I don’t like having to say no to such a proposition, but alas we have little choice.” Cullen shrugged. “Let’s meet after everything is said and done.”

Alistair and Evelyn nodded their agreement. The following hours were no doubt going to drag mercilessly, but Cullen was right - they had to get through it.

It was already very late when Evelyn finished all her tasks for the day. She was the first one to reach their bedchamber and she paced impatiently, her shoes making a strange sound as she passed from the carpet to the stone floor and back again, so she kicked them off.

Walking from one room to another, she checked that she was truly alone. The servants have already packed up all of Alistair’s luggage and were now gone. That was a good thing. The absence of her husbands on the other hand, was not.

They had much more to do than she did, she knew. She had weeks to prepare for the arrival of the nobles, and Alistair and Cullen were departing on the morrow, but she couldn’t help being annoyed.

She needed a distraction, so she stretched out on a couch in the small private library, a book in her lap, but it couldn’t hold her interest. Was there a hole in her stocking?, she wondered, tapping her foot on the floor. There was. She took both of her stockings off. Her ring snagged on the material. Evelyn sighed and walked over to her wardrobe to deposit it in the jewellery box, along with her necklace. Since she was there, she may as well take off her dress. It would be nice to have help with the task, but it was something to do.

Muttering angrily at the ties holding the garment together was something of a diversion. By the time she was standing in nothing but her underthings, she was still alone. Maker, how she hated Arl Randolph. He was ruining everything - first her country, and then her personal life.

Leaving the wardrobe, Evelyn stomped through the rooms again, trying to expend some of her energy. The moment Alistair and Cullen were through the doors, she was going to pounce on them like a wolf on a defenceless deer. With expediency in mind, she pushed her knickers down her legs.

She fervently hopes that she’s already reached her limit of servant interruptions. Or that at least this time someone was going to knock, lest they see their very naked, very irritated queen stalking through the chambers with what she assumed had to be a slightly wild look in her eyes.

Perhaps it was best she confined herself to the bedchamber. There, she divested herself of her corset and threw herself on the mattress. She always thought herself a relatively patient woman, but now she felt anything but. She had her needs, but so very rarely did they reach such an absurd level. Why it was happening, she could not tell.

Her eyes drifted close and her hands glided over her own body slowly. Visions of what she waited for danced through her mind, and she felt herself growing wetter by the moment. If neither of her
husbands arrived within five minutes...

The sound of the doors opening caused Evelyn to jump up from the bed with an excited gasp.

“Anybody there?” Alistair called out.


There was a laugh, followed by “As Her Majesty commands.”

Alistair strode into the bedchamber already shirtless and without shoes. For a moment he gaped at her naked form, as if he hasn’t seen it a thousand times over, and his wanton gaze send a thrill through Evelyn. She crossed the room in a few quick strides and began pulling Alistair towards the bed by the belt.

“Do you want to wait for Cullen? I think he’ll be here shortly.”

“Do you think he’ll mind terribly if we start without him?” Evelyn wanted to know, still trying to consider her husband’s feelings, even if her own were screaming at her to act and not think.

“I think he’ll understand. Or perhaps we’ll have to apologize or face some kind of a punishment.”

Evelyn laughed, working on his belt.

“How dreadful. Anything but that.”

The belt gave way under her fingers, and Evelyn turned Alistair around, pushed him on the bed, and pulled off his breeches in one quick movement. He scrambled backwards to lay fully on the mattress, and Evelyn crawled over him.

His cock was already half hard, and she grinned at him, as it thickened under her hand.

“Maker, I need this so badly,” she confessed, an edge of desperation in her voice.

“Then… take it,” Alistair managed to gasp out, as she continued to work his cock.

Evelyn didn’t need to be told twice. She positioned herself over his erection, the tip brushing between her folds. They both moaned at the contact. A small part of Evelyn wanted to tease Alistair, to have him more desperate than she was, to hear him beg, but this was not the night for that. She couldn’t postpone her own pleasure even a moment longer, so she sank down, relishing the feeling of being stretched and filled. Her head fell back and her lips parted on a prolonged sigh when he finally bottomed out inside of her.

But that was not enough, not for long. Her hips were practically moving on their own accord. Bracing her hands on the firm muscles of Alistair’s chest, she lifted herself up, before coming back down, her nails digging into his skin, drawing out a groan from him. She did it again, her hips moving harder, faster, her nails pressing more firmly, as she started to establish a rhythm.

One of Alistair’s hands was on her knee, and the other moved over her side, up her spine, to the back of her head, to pull her down for a kiss. She had to slow down, in order to allow it, grinding over Alistair’s cock more than anything, but that was good too, since she had the taste of his open mouth, the feeling of his tongue stroking over hers, his fingers in her hair.

Her hands moved from his chest to above his arms, to give her a better purchase. That carried with it another benefit - when they broke apart, and she started moving again, her chest would come close to
Alistair’s head. He took full advantage of the fact, capturing her nipple in his mouth for a second, before letting go, then teasing it with his tongue. Evelyn was torn between the desire to move more vigorously and letting Alistair tend to her aching breasts. Whatever she chose, it wasn’t going to take long for her to reach the apex of her pleasure, she knew. She’s waited the whole day for this moment, and now every bit of stimulation felt amplified.

The sound of doors opening and closing caught her in mid motion, Alistair’s lips still latched on to her nipple.

“Evelyn? Alistair?” Cullen called out, his footsteps getting closer.

“Bedchamber!” Evelyn responded, straightening up. She wanted see what Cullen was going to do when he found them like that, but she couldn’t just wait idly. Her hips still moved impatiently, sending tiny sparks of pleasure up her spine.

“Are you already…” he started, as he pushed the doors to the room open. “You are.”

His voice betrayed nothing. Evelyn watched him over her shoulder, the only visible reaction the tenting of his breeches.

“I couldn’t wait. I needed…”

For a moment Cullen seemed to think the situation over. Was he going to make her stop? Make her wait? Normally she’d relish the thought, but this time she was not certain about that. Would she be forced to disobey?

That question was quickly wiped from her mind, as Cullen strode to the bed, and knelt right next to her. Leaning in, he kissed her, all but plundering her mouth, making her lightheaded. One of his hands found its way between her legs, causing her hips to stutter in their movement, before resuming, even more desperately.

Cullen’s other hand migrated to her breast, giving it a firm squeeze, before pinching the nipple, hard. Evelyn moaned into his mouth, before biting at his lip. He almost laughed as he returned the gesture, pulling at her lower lip with his teeth and pinching her nipple again. Evelyn stilled, only able to moan, but then there were hands on her hips, Alistair’s strong hands, guiding her up and down, and up and…

And she fell apart, her back bowed, her nails scratching at whatever they could find, as she rode the wave of her pleasure, almost sobbing in relief.

When she somewhat returned to herself, she was ready to collapse on Alistair’s chest, but found that she couldn’t, held back by Cullen’s hands.

“Don’t stop,” he instructed, getting up, and slowly letting her go.

“Only for a moment,” she pleaded, nonetheless remaining upright, valiantly fighting against the sluggishness of her body.

There was a quick smack on her arse, making her moan, and then try to turn the sound into an indignant huff.

“You’ve been so desperate for it and now you’re done?” Cullen asked, starting to take of his jacket.

It sounded like a taunt to Evelyn, and she was not one to back down from a challenge. Her body still felt pleasantly boneless, and her thighs protested, but she started moving slowly, her sensitive nerves
sparking to life once more.

“I think you can do better.” The jacket sailed to the floor, followed by his undershirt, leaving Cullen gloriously naked from the waist up. “While I’ll be making sure Alistair never feels neglected,” Cullen crawled on the bed and bend down to kiss Alistair, “you might appreciate the chance to enjoy him while you can,” he added, pulling away.

Evelyn bit her lip. She could be sad at the prospect of separation, but she could also make the best of the situation, seize the night, because she wasn’t going to get an opportunity like that for weeks, if not months.

Her mind made up, Evelyn placed her palms firmly on Alistair’s chest and started moving in earnest, feeling strength returning to her body, along with her need.

“Good?” she asked of no one in particular.

“Better,” Cullen responded, throwing his boots and socks down on the floor.

“Perfect,” Alistair offered at the same time.

Evelyn smiled down at him. He looked so beautiful like that, eyes half closed, hair in disarray, freckles standing out starkly against his flushed cheeks. In that moment she felt this unnamed emotion, between arousal and fondness, and bent down to kiss him. His fingers, which were moving along her thighs, stilled, fingers pressing, as she took his mouth hungrily, never ceasing the rhythm of her hips.

What made Evelyn break the kiss was the feeling of another body behind her, or more precisely, the feeling of a hard cock against her lower back. She turned to look at Cullen, who wordlessly pulled her up, so that her back was flush with his chest, his erection trapped between them.

“I still think you can do a bit better,” he murmured against her ear.

With that, he took hold of her hips and started moving with her, pulling her up and wrenching her down, his significant strength making her movements much faster, pulling a long moan from her, and a similar groan from Alistair.

She wasn’t going to be outdone, Evelyn vowed, but it was difficult to concentrate and formulate a plan of retaliation when sensations were assaulting her from every side. She watched Alistair under her, his muscles shining with perspiration, mouth parted on sounds of pleasure, and moved her hands, trying to touch more of him. His hands traveled over her body, playing with her breast and the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex, and that was beyond distracting. Behind her Cullen was holding her hips with near bruising strength, just the way she liked it, and rubbing himself against her, letting her feel his muscles pressed to her back and his shaft against her arse. She threw her head back and Cullen seized the opportunity to kiss her neck, with a hint of teeth.

“Maker, I’m close again,” Evelyn gasped out.

Her hips started moving faster on their own accord, as the tension in her loins coiled tighter.

“Me too,” Alistair responded.

She felt him starting to drive up into her, hard, and almost shouted, the sound coming out muffled as she bit her lip.

“Don’t hold back,” Cullen told her, and the next time Alistair thrusted up into her, she allowed
herself to shout.

“I’m about to… I’m… Please…”

The desperation in Alistair’s voice and touches tugged at something inside of her.

“Yes, come inside me,” Evelyn breathed out, and it was supposed to be an encouragement, but as the words were leaving her mouth, she felt the damn breaking, and her own pleasure sweeping her. “Yes, yesss,” she continued to chant, her hips stilling, her back arched.

She felt Alistair filling her, her orgasm prolonging as he joined her. It was so much stronger than the first time around, and her body wasn’t in her control anymore. She fell forward, panting and still twitching slightly.

Alistair murmured something to her, some praise, expressions of love, she could infer that much from the tone, but the actual words were lost to her. In response she only sighed and kissed at the patch of skin closest to her open mouth, which happens to be his chest.

Her breathing was almost but not quite normal when she was unceremoniously rolled to her back and now Cullen was looming over her, grinning dangerously.

“I don’t think you’re done yet,” he said.

Evelyn could just as well fall asleep, but that was their last night before separation, and she’d be damned if she was going to waste it. If she were to be the more active party, she would beg for more time to recover, but from the way Cullen was looking at her, she knew that he was about to fuck her, and all she had to do was lay back and enjoy it.

“I’m not done,” Evelyn shot back. “But something tells me you need it more than I do.” She reached out to stroke his rigid cock, feeling the precome beaded on the crown.

Cullen groaned, and Evelyn counted that a victory.

“I always need you,” Cullen admitted. “And at the moment I need to take you, hard.”

“Please,” Evelyn breathed out, her fingers tightening on his cock reflexively.

Cullen wedged his hips between her thighs, and she spread them wider, wanting to give him all the space he needed. Cullen only grinned, apparently pleased by her eagerness. Taking a hold of the inside of her thigh, he bend her leg, making her open up further and gasp. Something in her always thrilled when he handled her like that.

Without making her wait, Cullen drove into her, sheathing himself inside of her in one long thrust, pushing her body up the mattress. She was going to need to brace herself, and so Evelyn reached behind herself to take hold of the bedding, and felt Alistair taking hold of her wrists, pinning them down, immobilizing her. He sat on his haunches behind her, smiling lazily. Evelyn wrapped her fingers around his wrists in turn and returned his smile.

She was about to say something, but in that moment Cullen pulled out of her almost completely, before thrusting back in, and this time Evelyn didn’t even try to suppress her cry. Her fingers tightened over Alistair’s wrists.

“She likes that,” Alistair commented.

“Of course she does, needy woman.” Cullen repeated the movement, and Evelyn felt her entire body
trembling, yet not moving up or down, pinned by Cullen’s hips and Alistair’s hands.

“You say it… you say it…” Evelyn found it hard to formulate sentences correctly as Cullen continued to pound into her, “like it’s a bad thing,” she finished, attempting to sound teasing, but ending up out of breath.

“Oh no, not bad,” Cullen countered, squeezing the flesh of her thigh tighter, pushing her leg higher. “I love having you like this. Both of you.”

Evelyn moaned at the feeling of his cock inside of her and at the same time pictured Alistair in her position, and looked up at him, finding his face enraptured.

“We’re lucky, aren’t we?” she asked, catching his eye.

“So very lucky.” Now Alistair’s fingers were gripping her wrists tighter, and even that small feeling made Evelyn’s breath hitch.

“Don’t you feel… ah…” Evelyn stuttered as Cullen shifted his hips slightly, and now when he fucked into her, he was also grinding against her pearl, and Evelyn lost her train of thought for a moment. “Don’t you feel lucky?” she asked at last, now turning her eyes on Cullen. “Having two people so desperate for your cock…”

It was Cullen’s turn to groan.

“Very… very… very lucky,” he panted out, every word punctuated by a snap of his hips.

His thrusts were more shallow now, but faster, his cock rubbing against the bundle of nerves at the top of her sex over and over. She felt him inside of her, over her, everywhere.

She was getting close again, was about to say as much, when Cullen slowed down and started leaning forward. A disappointed sob tore itself out of Evelyn’s throat, and quickly morphed into a moan when she saw Alistair also leaning forward, kissing Cullen, their mouths moving languidly, open and filthy.

Ordinarily she would’ve enjoyed the sight much more, but at this moment every second that they kissed was another second that Cullen was moving inside her torturously slowly, at a pace which would not allow Evelyn to finish. The sounds coming from her lips turned desperate again. She tried to move on her own, but was unable to do so.

A plea was on the tip of her tongue, but she wasn’t forced to beg because Cullen parted and smirked down at her in a manner which would be infuriating if it wasn’t so attractive, not to mention accompanied by a quick thrust, followed by another.

“You’ll remember that, won’t you, after we leave?” Cullen demanded, increasing the intensity of his movements, returning Evelyn to the brink of ecstasy.

“I’ll remember every… every second,” she confirmed in a voice shaky with desire, looking Cullen right in the face, before tilting her head back to see Alistair.

Evelyn didn’t have long to look at him, because he bend down to kiss her. Their lips met at an odd new angle, and there was something exciting in the novelty. His tongue was pushing into her mouth, stroking against hers, mimicking what was happening between her legs, and that additional stimulation was what finally made her unravel.

Alistair was retreating, allowing her to keen and moan as loudly as she needed to, yet still keeping
her down, anchoring her by her wrists as her back lifted off the mattress. Cullen continued to fuck her through her orgasm, before joining her, spilling inside her with a long groan.

When the most intense feelings subsided, leaving the pleasant afterglow, Evelyn felt complete awareness returning to her body. The pressure on her wrists was verging on painful and her thigh was threatening to cramp. She made an inarticulate noise, somehow distinct from the sounds of her breathing evening out, and her husbands must’ve understood it, since Alistair let go of her wrists and Cullen laid by her side.

“Are you alright?” Alistair demanded, moving to her other side and starting to gently rub at her wrists.

“Of course I am.” Evelyn smiled reassuringly, stretching out. “I’d be very disappointed if I were to be able to walk with perfect comfort tomorrow morning.”

“No chance of that happening.”

Evelyn chuckled at the smug tone in Cullen’s voice. He did earn the right to be smug, though, as did Alistair. That was a perfect goodbye. It was going to make their parting slightly more bearable, but she was going to miss them terribly regardless.

“I love you,” she said, looking at them in turn. “I won’t tell you to make it quick. You need to do this right, but know that I’m waiting, impatient.”

“We’ll miss you too,” Alistair told her.

“We’ll be back as soon as possible, without a moment of delay,” Cullen assured her.

“Yes, we have an equally important mission waiting here.” Alistair placed his palm on Evelyn’s belly.

“Yes, when we return there’ll be no distractions, nothing standing in our way.” Cullen’s hand also found its way to Evelyn’s stomach.

In that moment she had no doubt that a new life was going to grow there. She was going to deal with the banns, Alistair and Cullen with the border troubles, and then they were going to grow their family. Evelyn pressed their hands to her flesh and smiled.

They needed to wash up and prepare for sleep, if they were to be of any use the next morning, but that could wait for a moment - it was so very pleasant to lay down with the men she loved, and picture the moment when they were going to be touching the expanding curve of her belly. She could hardly wait - to have them back, and to have their child.

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Chapter End Notes

This chapter is brought to you by a proud owner of a master's degree who also got a new job. I haven't been completely idle in the past months. I'm afraid to check how long it's been since I posted the last chapter. I hope there'll still be someone reading. If you are here, I'm not making any promises as to the next chapter, but it's the home stretch. Still a bit of smut to come, and a lot of silly improbably happy family fluff.

If you can, leave kudos or a comment. I really appreciate those.
The successes

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

If not for the destination, their journey would’ve been a very pleasant one, Cullen decided, resting his head on Alistair’s shoulder and watching moonlight dancing over the waters of a small lake in the middle of a dense pine forest. He took a long breath, smelling the resin mixed with Alistair’s traveling leathers and his customary soap. Yes, if they weren’t headed towards querulous nobility, he would’ve been perfectly happy.

Getting annoyed at the prospect of dealing with them wasn’t useful, so Cullen pushed the thought away. They were due to arrive in the Arl’s castle in a matter of days, so they had to enjoy to the fullest the few moments of peace they still had.

He truly appreciated Evelyn’s suggestion that he and Alistair spend some time alone. They both missed Evelyn, just like he and Evelyn missed Alistair together in Skyhold, but it was certainly rewarding to have this new experience. Now they shared something together, just the two of them, in the same way as Evelyn shared something with the both of them. It was obvious that they worked best when they were all together, but that didn’t diminish their connections one on one. Perhaps it made it all the more significant that any two of them could’ve been happy together, and yet they’ve all found each other.

Life on the road was certainly enjoyable. They had to push themselves hard in order to make good time, but there were always moments of relaxation, and travelling in itself, even if strenuous, had its pleasures. They were passing through some truly beautiful parts of the kingdom, and Cullen liked to take a moment to admire them. He was biased, he wouldn’t deny that, deeply attached to his homeland, but he was certain that anyone could appreciate the stark beauty of the Fereldan mountains and the lushness of its forests.

They had quite a bit of freedom, since they weren’t staying in towns or estates of noble families. Instead, to save time, they were setting camps. Alistair was reminded of his time with Fergus Cousland, and he regaled Cullen, Lady Florence and the small number of knights accompanying them, with tales of that time. Cullen loved listening to him and watching him, his voice raising in excitement, his face somehow even more handsome illuminated by the open fire.

At one point in his life Cullen would’ve probably been thinking of what he was going through during the Blight, but that was behind him, and he could focus entirely on Alistair’s words. When they were alone after the first time Alistair told one of his stories, he did ask Cullen how he felt about it, apologetic, since he didn’t pose that question beforehand, but Cullen could tell him with perfect sincerity that he was more than fine.

They did get to be alone each night, which was much more important to Cullen’s enjoyment of the journey than even the most picturesque mountain vistas. They couldn’t be over encumbered with numerous heavy packs, so no-one had a tent to themselves. An exception could’ve been made for the king and his commander, but their decision to share a tent was seen as practical, earning the knight’s respect and increasing the feeling of camaraderie around the campfire.

What happened inside that tent was of no concern to their companions. At times nothing particularly scandalous transpired, since they were both worn out from hours on horseback, but it was still pleasant to share the same space, to exchange a kiss goodnight, to lay next to each other and whisper in the darkness of things which couldn’t be shared in the earshot of their knights.
Naturally there were nights when they could do more than talk. They had to be very quiet, and there was something exciting in that, in hands clamped over mouths, lips pressed to skin, sharp teeth marks on shoulders. Or perhaps what was exciting was the promise of how good it was going to feel to be loud again when they returned to the privacy of their home.

Cullen smiled, thinking of a particular evening when they started off playing chess, and Alistair was losing quite abysmally. He was not a master of the game, but he wasn’t terrible by any stretch of the imagination, yet on that evening Cullen already defeated him four times with shocking speed. Alistair tried to laugh it off, but Cullen could see that the game wasn’t bringing him any enjoyment, and in a moment of inspiration, he threw aside the board and dragged his husband close by his jacket and kissed him, silencing the sound of shock which Alistair made, seeing the pieces scattering in all directions.

“You knew that I was going to beat you this time, and you couldn’t have that, could you?” Alistair joked after breaking away.

Cullen could only laugh. He was three moves away from victory.

“Consider this your reward. Or compensation,” he offered, pushing Alistair to his back and reaching for his belt.

“Uh-oh, you’re thinking of something… special.” Alistair’s voice made Cullen snap back to the present.

“Just chess,” he answered, lifting his head up and grinning at this husband.

“Well, chess can be quite an exciting game.” Alistair returned his smile, catching his meaning.

Cullen nodded. He liked that kind of excitement, but those more peaceful moments were also important to him. While on the road, they talked almost constantly, between themselves, as well as with Lady Florence and the rest of their retinue, bantering easily, making the time go by faster. Despite that, in their tent they still had more to say to each other, sharing private jokes, speaking about Evelyn - wondering what she was doing, planning a perfect reunion and imagining growing their family. Cullen was partial to Jane, for the name of their daughter, while Alistair liked Emma. Evelyn was going to have to make that call if they were going to have a girl.

Sometimes they managed to take a small walk, explore their surroundings, and in those moments they were perfectly quiet. That, in Cullen’s opinion, was how one could tell that one was comfortable with another person - when there was no awkwardness in silence. They could still talk, but they didn’t need to, instead soaking up the atmosphere and enjoying just being. When the voices from the camp faded away, it was almost as if they were alone, in a world of their own, without nobles and knights and feuds. Cullen cherished those moments.

“Would it have been like this if we were to meet as Templars?” he wondered aloud after a moment of silence. The thought had been on his mind for some time now.

“I’ve been thinking about that too. I’m not sure if you would’ve liked me. I was unpopular - even more odd, loud and awkward than…”

“No,” Cullen stopped him sharply. “Not this again. You are an incredible man. I love you just the way you are, and I would’ve loved you back then as well. I can’t imagine a world in which I wouldn’t have fallen in love with you, if I were afforded the opportunity to truly know you. Perhaps it would’ve been you not interested in me. Have you considered that? I was very prim and proper, a stick in the mud - I can admit that now.”
“I can’t believe that.” Alistair shook his head. “Deep down you must’ve always had your sense of humor and fun. If you’d’ve given me a chance I would’ve pulled it to the surface. And you’d help me study. We would’ve been good for each other.”

“I’m sure we would. I only wonder if we would’ve allowed ourselves to be more than friends. I was so confused back then, so reluctant to embrace what I was told was wrong.”

“I was the same. In that respect becoming the king freed me. I could do as I pleased, who I pleased.” He made a face. “I’m sure you don’t want to think of that.”

“We all have a past. I don’t mind yours. I’m glad you had pleasure in your life.”

“Everything I experienced before I met you can’t compare to a single day with you and Evelyn. But don’t let me get too sentimental.” Alistair rolled his eyes. “Perhaps,” he continued, “if we were to meet as two confused young men we would’ve helped each other understand that there was nothing wrong with us. Perhaps we would’ve kissed, touched, went further. But we could also have pined after each other endlessly, never daring to act.”

“There are so many roads our lives could’ve taken if we met back then.” Cullen mused. “Regardless of whether we would’ve been the closest of friends or lovers, we could’ve both stayed as Templars or both joined the Wardens, we could’ve went our separate ways and reconnected much later. But we would be together in the end, you, me and Evelyn, I have no doubt about that.”

“What if we became Wardens and then Fergus convinced me to take the throne? You would’ve been my commander, that’s obvious, but where does Evelyn enter into this?” Alistair questioned.

“That depends.” Cullen paused, numerous scenarios he hadn’t contemplated until that very moment unfolding in his mind. “If we were still afraid to confess our feelings, she would’ve made us do it. And if we were together, well… I think we would’ve felt guilty for being attracted to her, and then we would’ve confessed that terrible transgression, and realized that it was not a problem but an opportunity. That would’ve been even more complicated than the way we actually came together.” He laughed. It was very odd to imagine that their lives could’ve been even more difficult. “We’ll never know. It’s interesting to go over all those possibilities, but I hope you know that if I could, I wouldn’t have changed a thing.”

“Not a thing?” Alistair demanded, his brows drawn in confusion.

“No.” Cullen shook his head vehemently. There was a time in his life when he almost obsessively went over all the ways he would’ve fixed his life if he could, but those days were over. “All my experiences made me the man I am today, and I like that man. I’m stronger and more compassionate than I would’ve been if I haven’t gone through all my trials. It’s pleasant to think that we would’ve been together regardless of circumstances, but I think it happened just the way it was supposed to.”

“So you wouldn't prefer to live in Varric’s novel - adventuring across Antiva?”

“At this moment I wouldn’t, but ask me after we reach our destination, and I may have a different answer for you.”

Alistair laughed.

“We’ll deal with them.” This time Alistair was the confident one. Usually it was Cullen who had to reassure him that they were going to put their subjects in their place, but when Cullen needed to hear it, Alistair was ready to put him at ease. “Speaking of which, we have to go back to camp. Duty calls.”
He made to get up, but Cullen wasn’t quite ready to let go of the moment, so he tugged on Alistair’s sleeve and pulled him in for a kiss. Alistair chuckled before their mouths connected.

“I’m terrible and selfish,” he murmured when they parted, “but I’m so very glad you’re here with me, that I’m not to face this alone.”

“And I’m glad to be with you,” Cullen told him. “Maybe I can be with you in the tent?” he suggested. They should go to sleep, and yet…

“I’d like that.”

Alistair got up, offered Cullen a hand and didn’t let go of it until they saw the lights of the camp.

It was very fortuitous that they managed to come together in the tent that night - they didn’t get another chance while on the road, since Lady Florence suggested they pick up the pace. The young woman was getting more and more anxious the closer they got to her family home, and neither Cullen nor Alistair had the heart to deny her. Her beloved brother’s life could be in danger, so no-one could begrudge her desperation to get to him faster.

By the end of the week they reached the Arl’s castle, and their time alone evaporated into the stuffy perfumed air of two estates filled with people who would’ve been spitting in each other’s faces if it wasn’t impolite.

It was surprising that their meetings with Celene turned out to be the most relaxing. The empress was still grateful to Evelyn and Cullen, and by extension Alistair, for saving her life. It also didn’t hurt that for once their interests were completely aligned - both monarchs wanted nothing but peace between their nations, and had no intention of supporting their subjects blindly. Alistair and Celene didn’t hold Arl Randolph’s and Lady Genevieve’s behavior against their royal partner, instead attempting to find common ground between the two stubborn people.

They’ve been working for almost two weeks, with no hopes of getting to the bottom of the situation, and tensions were running particularly high. The previous day Arl Randolph and Lady Genevieve met for the first time face to face, and managed to be civil, which seemed a good sign, but the very next morning the Arl was back to his angry rhetoric. All the hours of persuasions, of logical arguments, of appeals to his patriotism, of pleas from his daughter and younger son - it all appeared to have been in vain.

Cullen suspected that one of the arl’s advisers was poisoning his mind. But which one? More than a few people in the castle were set in their ways, acting as if Ferelden was still warring with Orlais. Cullen looked around the room, scanning the faces of the nobles, until he reached Alistair. His husband was fighting so hard to remain calm. He was smiling, but in a way which Cullen immediately recognized as false. His hands were gripping the arms of the chair so tightly his knuckles were turning white. His whole posture was rigid, as if by keeping his body controlled, his emotions would follow suit.

Lord Edgar, an elderly man with near nonexistent lips and tiny but fierce eyes, returned to his pet project of surrounding Lady Genevieve’s estate and searching it top to bottom, to no doubt find the battered Lord Quentin in a dank cellar, and Cullen saw Alistair’s jaw working subtly. He was gnashing his teeth, indulging in the unhealthy habit which Cullen and Evelyn tried to rid him of. He was going to snap at the doddering old fool unless Cullen intervened.

Cullen brushed an imaginary piece of lint from his right shoulder, and a servant moved to his side swiftly, reacting to the pre-established signal.
“An urgent message, ser,” the servant whispered into his ear.

Cullen nodded pensively and got up.

“Begging your pardon, my lords and ladies, Arl Randolph,” he addressed the gathering, “we’ve just received a message which cannot wait. I must confer with the king.”

Alistair wasted no time getting up, his chair scraping over the stone floor loudly. The entire gathering also got up and returned Alistair’s shallow bow.

“That didn’t sound good, but Maker, I’ll take just about anything to get a respite from that old lunatic,” Alistair muttered angrily, following Cullen down the corridor.

Cullen cast him a sideways glance. He was sure Alistair was going to catch on, but he was clearly too preoccupied.

“There’s no message. I just thought you needed a break. Can’t have you verbally murdering an elderly subject,” he said, smirking when Alistair’s eyes went wide.

“You’re brilliant and I love you.” Alistair beamed. “Do you have an idea as to what I should do about Lord Edgar? And how should we shut up Lady Barbara? Her prayer circle is the most useless thing since…”

Cullen shook his head.

“None of that. You need a true break. I should’ve given you one a long time ago.”

They were by the king’s chambers already. Cullen pushed the doors open and turned the key in the lock behind them.

“That’s very kind of you to want to take my mind off of things, but we have so much to do, to think over…” Alistair protested, the words trailing off as Cullen starting to take off his jacket.

“You need a break.” The jacket was on the floor, followed by his undershirt. “You’re running yourself ragged. I used to be the same.” Cullen’s sword belt clanged on the floor. “And then a brilliant woman explained to me that a mind needs space for ideas to flourish, for answers to rise to the surface.” His boots and socks were next to join the growing pile. “She would never forgive me if I didn’t take care of you.”

Alistair wasn’t saying anything, wasn’t protesting, his eyes roaming over Cullen’s exposed chest, and Cullen felt his cock hardening under his husband’s gaze.

“So what do you say?” he asked, extending a hand towards Alistair. “Will you take a break? For your queen and country.”

“And for my Commander,” Alistair responded, taking his hand and allowing Cullen to pull him to the bedchamber.

Once there, Cullen started working on his belt, while Alistair was undoing his own jacket.

“What convinced you to agree? My arguments or my near nudity?” Cullen asked.

“That’s a trap.” Alistair laughed, throwing off his jacket, as Cullen succeeded with the belt. “I can’t praise you more for being handsome than for being wise, or the other way around.” He reached down to rid himself of his boots. “That’s why I will say both.”
“Both is usually the correct answer,” Cullen told him, reaching for the laces of his breeches and palming his erection.

“Maker,” Alistair hissed, “it’s been far too long.”

He all but tore his undershirt off of himself and stepped out of his breeches.

“Agreed.” Cullen took the sight of him in - the toned muscles dotted with freckles, the high cheekbones covered with a faint flush, the pleading eyes and eager cock. He was perfect, that husband of his.

They didn’t have much time, but Cullen didn’t want to rush. He kissed his husband hard, pushing his tongue into his mouth almost roughly, and was rewarded with a long moan which turned into a disappointed gasp when he broke away, trailing his lips over his jaw.

“I wish I could leave a mark here,” he whispered against Alistair’s throat, scraping his teeth against the length of it.

“That would give them something new to talk about instead of…”

Alistair was going to start talking about the issues again, so Cullen bit his lip, before kissing him again.

“Point taken.” Alistair laughed, and reached for the laces at the front of Cullen’s breeches. It was Cullen’s turn to let out a moan.

It was exceedingly difficult not to get distracted by Alistair’s hand running over his cock and cupping his balls. He gave Cullen only a moment of respite as he pulled his breeches down his legs.

“I want to be inside of you,” Cullen whispered against his ear. “If you’re amenable,” he added, even though he received his response in the way Alistair’s body moved ever so closer to his. He liked to hear Alistair say how much he wanted him.

“I’m very amenable. Very very amenable.” Alistair pressed his chest to Cullen’s, and Cullen could swear he felt his rapid heartbeat. “There’s a vial in the nightstand drawer.”

“Perfect.” Cullen kissed him again and maneuvered them closer to the bed.

When they reached the foot of the bed, Alistair sat down without having to be prompted, and crawled up to rest in the center. Cullen followed, looming over him as he searched the cluttered drawer. How could Alistair have made such a mess there? There were pieces of parchment, a book, a candle stub, and… a piece of candy?

At last Cullen found what he was looking for, and moved to face his husband, only to notice him looking at a pile of letters resting on the nightstand on the other side of the bed.

“None. Of. That,” Cullen bit out. What he came to realize was his “Commander voice” came out, and Alistair’s whole demeanor changed in an instant. He had his full attention now. Why was it always such a thrill to see that? Cullen didn’t know, or care, for that matter. “If you’ll think about the nobles in this bed I shall be very cross,” he informed Alistair. “Will you do that?”

“No!” Alistair protested. “Of course not. You’re the only one I’ll think about.”

“Well,” Cullen uncorked the vial and poured some of its contents on his palm, “there’s one other person I can permit you to think about, but that’s it.”
Alistair nodded quickly, as Cullen trailed a warm and sticky finger down his chest. His legs parted on their own accord when Cullen reached his stomach. His hips shifted, trying to get Cullen to touch his cock, but he refused, moving instead to push a finger inside Alistair. He accepted Cullen so easily, that he almost immediately added a second finger and started twisting them.

“What are you thinking about?” Cullen demanded.

Alistair’s previously closed eyes snapped open as he looked right at Cullen.

“You. I think about how much I want you. How foolish I’ve been to ever try and deny us this.”

Cullen bend down to reward him for the correct answer with a kiss, and at the same time added a third finger. Alistair gasped into his mouth and pressed his hips down, aiding him in his exploration.

“Now I’m thinking that I can hardly wait to have you fuck me.” Alistair’s words were a breath against Cullen’s lips. They were distracting enough that Cullen almost didn’t notice Alistair taking the vial from his left hand.

In a moment Alistair’s slick fist was pumping over Cullen’s erection. Their hands lingered, as each of them let out sounds of pleasure. They could come just like that. But that was not the plan. That would’ve been pleasant enough, it served them well on many a night, or afternoon, and even one or two mornings, but this time Cullen knew they needed something more complete, all-consuming.

“Stop,” he ordered.

Alistair wasn’t sufficiently quick in obeying, so Cullen grabbed his wrist and yanked his arm above his head. For a second he wasn’t sure if the gasp he heard was one of pleasure or shock, but one look at Alistair’s face gave him the answer.

“You’re other hand,” Cullen commanded, and this time Alistair obeyed instantaneously. “I wish I had a length of rope here,” Cullen said, almost to himself, as his fingers couldn’t enfold both of Alistair’s wrists. The man under him moaned. “You don’t have to tell me what you’re thinking about now. But we’ll make do with what we have.”

Cullen moved his hands so that one of Alistair’s wrists was resting on the other, which allowed him to press them both down into the mattress with his hand. Carefully, he pushed up, making Alistair stretch out further, the muscles of his arms pulled taut.

“Please,” Alistair whined. “Pleeeaseee.”

In that moment Cullen knew he was succeeding completely. There was only that one word in Alistair’s mind, only that one need. Nothing else mattered, nothing else existed.

In order to fulfill his husband’s request, he had to temporarily slacken his hold on his wrists as he positioned himself at Alistair’s entrance. He didn’t feel the need to go slowly, not with the way Alistair was shifting his hips, as if trying to pull him inside, and so he went in with a hard, decisive push, rocking them both.

Alistair’s hands shifted, almost falling out of Cullen’s grasp, and without thinking he lifted his other hand from between their bodies, now able to hold each wrist separately. In that position their torsos were pressed together with not a breath of space between, Alistair’s cock trapped between them.

He moved again, this time with a more measured pace, and felt Alistair’s precome leaking out, easing the way as his cock rubbed against Cullen’s stomach muscles. When he pulled out and returned with another thrust, Alistair arched his back, adding more friction between their bodies, wordlessly
begging for more.

Cullen was more than willing to provide, and picked up his pace. Alistair moved his hands, and Cullen was almost certain it was on purpose, to make him tighten his hold, press him down. That he could do as well.

“Yesss,” Alistair hissed, when Cullen’s fingers gripped his wrists harder, and he fucked into him.

There was sweat gathering between their bodies now, making it even easier to move. They were so close that it felt to Cullen as if they were almost one.

“What are you… what are you thinking about?” he asked between ragged breaths.

“Please,” was Alistair’s response.

Cullen supposed he could demand an actual answer, but that was better. Alistair was truly relaxed, a million miles away from everything that was causing him stress. His face was tense with need, mouth parted as he gasped. If it were possible, Cullen would’ve kept him in that state for hours, but his own body was demanding its due, and so he pushed harder, faster, hearing the bed creak and Alistair gasp.

A distant part of his mind told him that they couldn’t be very loud. He hated that. He wanted to hear Alistair fall apart with an unrestrained moan, but they had to make do.

“Will you come for me?” he whispered against Alistair’s ear, and felt his nod.

There was only one way to keep him somewhat quiet, so Cullen kissed him. Now every part of their bodies was connected. There was no telling if it was the thrust of his cock or his tongue that pushed Alistair over the edge, but Cullen felt his warm release spreading between them. The grip over his cock tightened and Cullen was following Alistair, gasping into his mouth, shuddering, falling, not able to hold himself up.

Soon there were hands on his back, running up and down in soothing motions. It took him a moment to realize that they shouldn’t have been there. Oh, he’s let go of Alistair’s wrists when he came, he realized. He nuzzled into his neck, and felt Alistair sigh.

That same part of his brain which insisted they couldn’t make too much noise now helpfully supplied that he was probably crushing Alistair. Normally his husband would’ve been the one to tell Cullen to get off of him, but this time he was silent.

Reluctantly, Cullen rolled off.

“Are you alright?” he asked.

“Mmm-mm,” Alistair hummed.

“Did I fuck you into silence?”

“Mmm.”

“Evelyn will be so proud of me.”

Alistair chuckled.

They stayed like that for some minutes. Cullen was returning to himself, and realizing how long they had to have been absent. They needed to move, to clean up. But how could he steal those moment of
peace from Alistair, who deserved them so much?

“Thank you,” his husband told him at last. “That was exceptional.” Alistair opened his eyes. “You were right about relaxation being good for problem solving. I think I have an idea as to how we can bring the nobles closer.”

“I hope you’re not proposing a septuagenarian orgy.” Cullen nudged his side and Alistair sniggered.

“No, not all of them are that old, but I’m actually not proposing anything of that sort,” he responded. “I think we should discuss it with Celene. And we need Lady Florence with us as well. We should dress.”

Cullen saluted and went off to gather his clothes.

The next hours were spent in planning. After making excuses to the arl and his advisers, Cullen, Alistair, Lady Florence, Celene and her closest lady in waiting shut themselves in Alistair’s chambers, and discussed organizing an open air feast in a neutral territory right on the border. As Alistair reasoned, since logical arguments and proper meetings went nowhere, it was time to open a few dozen casks of wine and try to force the antagonistic nobles to see the other side as human, capable of enjoying the simple things in life.

Celene agreed, but that was only the start. The food and drink had to be chosen carefully, and the seating arrangements even more so. Lady Florence was indispensable in that task. She had a childhood companion who actually befriended an Orlesian noble woman, and the four of them, together with Celene’s lady in waiting, drew up a complicated chart, connecting people on both sides who had interests and opinions in common. Cullen could only look on in admiration. When he told lady Florence that Leliana would be proud of her work, the girl beamed at him with evident pride.

Since other preparations were going to take more time, the feast was set to take place in three days time. In the meantime Alistair and Celene agreed that before the meeting, they needed to build more common ground. As they kept throwing out suggestions as to what could bring their peoples together, Cullen remembered Evelyn’s comment made on the day when they first found out about the situation - she suggested that if Tevinter or the Qun were responsible for the disappearance of the two heirs, it would make Fereldans and Orlesians organize to fight a common enemy. The spies didn’t find any proof which could suggest that either nation was responsible, but no one besides Alistair, Cullen and Celene was informed of their findings.

When Cullen suggested presenting that possibility to the nobility, he could see a spark in Celene’s eye. The empress was immediately on board with the idea. Alistair agreed with it as well. It was quite incredible to think that Evelyn was helping them from all the way in Denerim. Once they were back, they were going to have to thank her properly.

In the meantime, they set their plans into motion, preparing for the feast and planting ideas into the noble’s minds.

By the time the day of the feast came, the groundwork was laid, and things appeared to be going smoothly. The setting was very picturesque, the food and drink excellent, the weather favorable, and the people started relaxing as the wine flowed. No-one became instant friends, but outward hostility was almost gone. The younger participants of the gathering seemed to be open and friendly. Cullen could see more than a few couples eyeing each other with barely disguised interest.

Voices could be heard assuring that no Vint or Qunari could stand against the might of Ferelden and Orlais. Knights boasted good naturedly about who’d be most effective in a fight.
It would be foolish to assume that one night could make up for decades of mistrust and resentments, and Cullen didn’t hold out such hopes, but the following days proved that he had reason for optimism going forward. There were more mild voices during meetings, far less shouting, and when the few holdouts advocated violent action, neither he nor Alistair had to shut them down - it was the other nobles who protested.

It was in this much less strained atmosphere that the most welcome news has reached them. Ser Quentin and Lady Giselle were spotted on the road leading to Lady Genevieve’s estate. They appeared unharmed and in good spirits. That turn of events was very welcome, but also surprising. What could’ve happened to them during the past weeks? Curiosity and worry battled in Cullen’s mind as he and Alistair got on their horses to ride to the estate.

The weeks following her husbands’ departure felt to Evelyn like two days, flashing by in a flurry of activity. She was constantly busy with preparations for the arrival of the bannorn, and she only had the time to miss Alistair and Cullen when she was finally allowed to go to bed.

In a way it was good for her to have so much on her plate - she didn’t relish the fact that she was going to have to spend a week entertaining the nobility, but at the same time she knew that when her subjects left, she wouldn’t have any extra duties which could distract her from the fact that her husbands were gone.

She’d have to find something productive to do. But that was a worry for another day, because on the morning of the first day of the gathering, Evelyn had to focus on controlling her nausea, which was rather irritating. She thought she was perfectly calm, ready for whatever would come, but her body was proving her wrong. On some deep level she had to be anxious, and that anxiety was presenting itself in that unpleasant form.

Having eaten very little for breakfast, Evelyn went down to check if everything looked right in the throne room. She knew it to be so, but another inspection couldn’t hurt. That task accomplished, she returned to her bedchamber to pace restlessly. She was very glad to see Antonia waiting for her, ready to take her mind off things and tell her once more that she looked appropriately regal in a burgundy dress with golden trim and a spectacular cloak embroidered with Ferelden’s coat of arms.

Antonia’s presence helped Evelyn immensely, and as she was going down to the throne room to open the proceedings at noon, she felt her stomach settle. She did not feel like vomiting any longer, and she could smile with genuine confidence at the gathered banns.

That smile was threatening to slip from her face more than once during the day. Most of her guests were aware of the situation at the border, and after arriving in the capital heard about their king’s and commander’s mission, and yet she had to provide more details, and her assurance that things were going to be settled quickly and to everyone’s satisfaction. Only one bann grumbled about bringing the fight to the filthy Orlessians, but was soon shouted down by the others, who were contented with Evelyn’s promises and didn’t wish the situation to escalate. That, Evelyn naively thought, was going to be the hardest part of the day, but in fact wasn’t.

What was the biggest nuisance was having to answer the barrage of various other questions relating to matters of state. When she was done with her response, someone was bound to offer their solutions, which were always conflicting with the wishes of their peers. Evelyn was going to have to set up quite a few meetings between herself and small groups of banns to mediate between them and find a way to keep everyone satisfied. She was making mental notes of who to invite when, but it was difficult to keep everything straight in her mind. It was a relief when Evelyn found out during a
private lunch that Antonia was meticulously writing everything down.

It took everything Evelyn had not to fall asleep at the evening feast. She was exhausted. More so than she anticipated. Needing to get to bed as soon as possible, she directed the servers to pour more and more wine and mead into the cups of her guests. If they were sufficiently inebriated, her absence wasn’t going to be an issue, she reasoned.

As she was slipping away to her bedchamber, Evelyn wondered if she was making the correct choice, but all such worries vanished when her head hit the pillow and sleep claimed her immediately.

What woke her the next morning, was another bout of sickness. That was beyond irritating. She had so much to do. She didn’t have the time for that nonsense! She sipped her tea angrily, trying to tell her stomach or her nerves or whatever was causing her nausea to stop it. After breakfast she had another meeting with the entire bannon, in the afternoon a small tourney, with their best knights presenting their skills, and in the evening a banquet. Evelyn’s stomach churned at the word. She had no desire to eat.

At breakfast she managed to force down a bit of toast with jam, while discussing the plans for the following days with Antonia and earl Emon. The jam was possibly a mistake, she mused in the throne room, as she swallowed rapidly, trying to prevent her throat from working in the other direction. Luckily during the tourney she felt much better and could enthusiastically applauded the knights. Things were going well, the banns enjoying themselves and acting perfectly cordially, and Evelyn was certain that the next morning she wouldn’t feel any nervous nausea.

She was proven wrong when the smell of roasted meat made her gag. She wasn’t nervous! She wasn’t! So why was she feeling that way?

Her eyes widened in panic when a thought occurred to her.

“Agnes,” she called to one of the serving girls, “did you hear of any guests feeling sick?”

“No, Your Majesty.”

Evelyn was still not convinced.

“Could you go and ask other servants if no-one is ill?”

“Certainly, Your Majesty.”

The girl courted and disappeared.

“Is something the matter?” Patricia demanded.

“It’s just… I feel a bit nauseous, and I’m worried that something we served was not fresh,” Evelyn told her lady in waiting. “If the banns got sick here…”

It didn’t bear thinking about. It would ruin all her plans and make such an abysmal impression on her subjects…

“I’m sure everything’s fine.”

Patricia patted her hand, but Evelyn was not comforted. Not until Agnes returned, and informed her that everyone was doing perfectly well, save for some headaches and fatigue caused by excessive drinking.
It had to be her, then. That realization made Evelyn feel better and worse at the same time. What was wrong with her?

She didn’t have time for that, she decided, gulping down the rest of her tea. She had a meeting in an hour.

Despite her growing unease, Evelyn survived the meeting, and the next one, and the one after that. The pattern repeated itself for three more days. Each day Evelyn felt queasy and tired, but pushed on, putting on a brave face and working diligently with her subjects during the days and entertaining them in the evenings.

It was on the seventh day, the day when everyone was to leave the palace, that the potential answer for her condition presented itself. Evelyn was having breakfast with Antonia, valiantly ignoring her nausea, when Agnes entered, carrying a fish pie. Evelyn’s reaction to the smell was stronger than to anything before. Her stomach roiled, her throat constricted, and she curled in on herself gagging violently.

“Your Majesty!” Agnes exclaimed, placing the pie on the table and rushing to Evelyn.

“Evelyn!” Antonia was by her side in a flash.

“Take it… Take it away,” Evelyn mumbled, pointing a shaky finger at the pie.

Agnes bowed, grabbed the plate, and hurried out of the room.

The smell of the pie lingered, and Evelyn staggered to a window and threw it open, gulping in lungfuls of clean air. Antonia moved to stand next to her, a strange smile on her face, which Evelyn found rather odd, if not a little cruel. She didn’t feel like smiling, and would expected her dearest lady in waiting to sympathize.

“Your blood hasn’t come, has it?” Antonia asked after a few moments.

Evelyn scrunched her brows, trying to remember when she had it last, and when it should’ve come.

“It’s been… Maker, it’s been a while,” she mumbled. “It should’ve started some time ago. It didn’t.”

Antonia’s smile widened.

“I thought so. I’ve observed that for the past months we’ve had it at the same time. For me it came and went, but I haven’t seen you in pain, and you wore that dress of very light colors, which you certainly wouldn’t if you were bleeding. And now this.”

“I’m never late,” Evelyn said, almost to herself. “Never. How could I’ve not noticed?”

“You hardly had the time to take a breath in peace, you were occupied with a thousand different things. It could’ve slipped your mind,” Antonia reasoned. “Is it the first time you feel sick in the morning?”

“No. I’ve been feeling this way since the day the banns arrived. I’ve been nauseous each morning, and so very tired by the time the day was done.”

There was a very pressing thought in Evelyn’s mind, insistent words she was afraid to voice, lest she make them untrue by speaking them aloud. She felt herself trembling slightly.

“Do you think you could be with child?” Antonia asked gently.
Evelyn’s hand drifted to her belly on its own accord.

“My breasts have been a bit painful as well,” she said, instead of answering. That seemed a minor complaint at the time, but now it felt like more evidence.

“We can’t be absolutely certain, but it seems more than likely then.” Antonia was grinning outright.

Evelyn was afraid to hope. She pressed her hand to her stomach, as if trying to find signs of a new life starting to develop.

“This month we didn’t have much time… I didn’t even think… We were going to… After…” Evelyn was muttering, trying to make sense of the situation.

They were going to try in earnest after Alistair and Cullen returned. She thought back to their last night, to them placing their hands on her belly, making a promise. She felt herself smiling as realization dawned. That night, it must’ve been that night! They touched her stomach and there was already their baby forming there.

“I wish they were here. They’ll be so happy. So happy.” She rubbed her stomach affectionately.

“Congratulations,” Antonia told her.

Evelyn embraced her, feeling pure joy surging through her.

“I can stall a bit so you can write to them now,” Antonia offered, pulling away.

“I… better not,” Evelyn decided, sobering up. “It’s so early. I know that it can… It doesn’t always take.”

She remembered the sorrow of her friends who lost their babies a few weeks after realizing they were expecting. That couldn’t happen to her. Couldn’t. It would hurt too much. She already loved that child fiercely, and thinking about losing it was unbearable.

“You’ll be fine. And so will the baby,” Antonia assured.

“Maker, I hope so.” Evelyn wrapped her arms around her middle protectively. “Still, I won’t write. Even if I were certain everything was in order, that’s not something I should send in a letter. I wish I could tell them now, but,” she felt herself smiling, “they’re going to have a surprise. The biggest surprise yet.”

“Do you wish to keep it a secret then?” Antonia enquired.

“In a month or two I’ll tell Patricia and Lady Joanna and the others, but no-one else, not until Alistair and Cullen are here,” Evelyn decided. “Perhaps my maid as well. I must stop having my corsets cinched in so tightly. The baby needs space. I better loosen this corset now.”

“I think after two or three weeks it’s still very small and won’t mind the corset,” Antonia told her. “But if it will ease your mind, we’ll do it now,” she added, probably noticing Evelyn’s concerned look. “And then you’ll eat something. Something not fish related.”

Evelyn felt herself gagging slightly just at the word.

“Let’s go to my dressing room, and never mention fish again.”

“Duly noted,” Antonia said with a smile.
For the rest of the day Evelyn had to force herself to think of things other than the fact that she was going to be a mother. She felt so happy, so proud. It was very difficult to say a polite farewell to all her departing guests, to be pleasant, but not show her immense excitement. It wouldn’t serve her to have the banns thinking she was overjoyed to see them leave.

That night, as she lay in bed, she allowed herself to indulge in perfect daydreams of the moment when Alistair and Cullen were going to find out, and of the moment they were all going to hold their baby. She fell asleep with a hand on her belly and happy thoughts in her mind.

In the coming weeks Evelyn decided to forgo corsets completely and each day stood before her mirror, trying to see if there was already a curve to her stomach.

She loved her baby, but she had to concede that the so called blessed state was not exactly perfect. Morning nausea hasn’t left her, and no more than three weeks after she discovered she was expecting, Evelyn started vomiting. She hardly left her chambers before noon, not wishing anyone to see her retching into a potted plant or on a carpet. Certain smells made the condition worsen. Fish were indefinitely banned from the entire palace. Strong spices were out of the question. Even some flowers now caused Evelyn’s stomach to turn.

Another unpleasant side effect was the increased fatigue. Evelyn started feeling somewhat useless. She felt like she did next to nothing, but she was still exhausted. Never before did she nap during the day, but it’s become a necessity if she were to function at all.

As her symptoms intensified, Evelyn had to let all of her ladies in waiting and maids know of her condition, so as not to worry them, and also in order to obtain their help. Their excitement at her happiness was very touching. She could also count on them to console her or cheer her up when her mood turned. It felt like the anger or irritation she experienced when her monthly blood came, but intensified to the extreme. She missed Alistair and Cullen terribly, sometimes turning weepy at the thought of how far away they were.

There was one part of their absence which she thought was going to be quite terrible, and yet wasn’t. The need for physical intimacy has left Evelyn completely. Between frequent vomiting and the constant exhaustion, she felt no desire. It was the complete opposite of what she experienced right before her husbands departed.

They exchanged letters, infrequent and somewhat official though they had to be, keeping each other informed of the newest developments. Evelyn reported that the gathering of the bannon was a success, and wrote about the small happenings in the castle, yet withheld the most important information. She was more than once tempted to let them know that they were going to become parents, but stopped herself each time, knowing that seeing their faces and having them embrace her was going to be infinitely more satisfying.

For their part, Alistair and Cullen wrote about the progress they made and issues still to be addressed.

If her calculations were correct, it was in the middle of the third month of her pregnancy that Evelyn received a letter which started with the much anticipated words “We’re coming home”.

“Little one, your fathers are returning!” she told her baby excitedly, rubbing her rounded belly.

In the preceding weeks she got in the habit of speaking aloud to her child, talking about her plans for the day, describing views and most importantly, reminiscing about Cullen and Alistair, and making plans for what they were going to be doing as a family. The baby most likely couldn’t understand her words, but Evelyn couldn’t stop herself. She loved those one-sided conversations, since they made her feel even more connected to her daughter or son.
Evelyn read the words over and over. They were returning to her. To them. They were going to be by her side, watching their child grow. She was already showing more than she expected three months in, and covering the growing bump was soon going to be a great challenge, even for her talented dressmaker and maid. With her husbands returned, Evelyn wasn’t going to hide anything.

When the first wave of excitement subsided somewhat, Evelyn continued with the letter. She was curious as to how the affair has ended. She felt her mouth parting in surprise when she read that the missing heirs, presumed abducted, turned out to be married, and not due to any evil machinations.

It was a love match, it turned out. The two young forward-thinking people were meeting in secret, trying to find ways to make peace between their two people, and ended up falling in love in the process. Certain that their parents would never allow them to wed, they married in secret, and proceeded to ride to lady Giselle’s friend’s estate, to spend several weeks in peace. The old chantry mother from a nearby village, who officiated, and was tasked with informing the parents after a few days elapsed, turned out to be a fan of strong spirits, and having raised one too many toasts to the newlywed's happiness, completely forgot that she was obligated to ease the noble's minds.

The young couple was shocked upon their return to find out that their departure has almost lead to tragedy, and forced both their monarchs to ride in as peacekeepers. Evelyn applauded their intentions, but the execution left much to be desired. She certainly hoped that Lady Giselle and Lord Quentin were going to learn from the debacle.

Cullen, who was the one writing the letter, described the interesting mixture of joy and utter defeat both noble parents experienced, having their children return to them unharmed, and then realizing that their heirs seemingly betrayed them. There were embraces and curses and plenty of tears. At first there was talk of annulment of the marriage, but Lady Giselle and Lord Quentin made it clear that there were no grounds for such a proceeding, since the marriage was performed by the appropriate authority, both parties were of age and willing, and the union has been consummated. The realization of what the new husband and wife were doing for several weeks in a charming estate all by themselves was another burden for Arl Randolph and Lady Genevieve to bear.

In the end Alistair, Cullen and Celene locked themselves in with their subjects, and made them realize that the situation was rather fortuitous. It took a lot of convincing, and a threat or two, but the nobles came to an understanding. Seeing as Lady Giselle was Lady Genevieve’s only child, Lord Quentin was to cede his claim to the arling of West Hills and live with his wife, while his younger brother inherited the title of arl. Lady Florence, who was the middle child, has already declared that she did not wish to become the arlessa. On one hand Evelyn regretted the fact that the smart and capable young woman was passing up an opportunity to rule, but on the other she knew that becoming the arlessa would mean that Florence would need to take a husband, which the girl could not do.

The two heads of the families were made to see reason, but their other relations and vassal knights were not particularly enthused. The situation would’ve been much worse if Alistair, Cullen and Celene haven’t already been laying the groundwork for reconciliation for weeks. It couldn’t be said that the Orlesians and Fereldans were friends, but they ended up raising toasts to the newlyweds at a hastily prepared feast in their honor, and each cup was drank with less hostility. No-one could deny that the couple was very much in love and looked beautiful together.

Now the responsibility for forging a better tomorrow for their peoples lied on the shoulders of Lady Giselle and Lord Quentin. In Cullen’s opinion they had a strong desire to do good, and, despite the pitiable decision to trust in the Chantry mother, were both intelligent people, which meant that their chances of success were rather high.
Their mission accomplished, both monarchs were to depart. Cullen was writing the letter the day of the feast, and they were planning on leaving a day after that. Evelyn hastily checked the date at the top of the letter and made some mental calculations.

“They’ll be here soon,” she told her baby, smiling. “We’ll be together, the whole family.”

Chapter End Notes

Like that one hair tie you though you've lost forever, but which months later materializes at the bottom of a kitchen drawer, I am back, back, back again.

We're so close. One last push (sorry, couldn't resist the labor pun). I'm finishing this year, which arguably isn't the best deadline, but it's the only one I can give with full confidence.

Fun fact - if a person has their period, it doesn't mean that they've ovulated that month. It sometimes happens that an egg wasn't released, and the only thing that is shed during menstruation is the uterine lining. I didn't know that. Maybe everyone else did, but I feel like my health class failed me. In the next chapter there's going to be another science fun fact. This is educational smut, damn it!

If you have a moment leave kudos or a comment. It means a lot to me to get them.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!