Kalieth and Tasla

Riders of the Plains of Narda

A furry story

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Chapter 1 - Of Love and the Moon Mother

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 I am Tasla, an eighteen year old female wild dog morph of the wild savanna plains of Narda. I have ruddy brown fur, reddish brown eyes, small rounded black furred ears and a short sleek black haired main. I have a short rounded black furred muzzle, with a thick black nose and soft black lips. I have small dexterous black furred hands, small black furred feet and a short thick furred tail, tipped with black. I am lean, slender and very agile, standing five feet tall from the top of my sleek black mane to my small soft black furred feet. Because of the extreme heat of the savanna day, I wear mostly a light leather top and a light leather loin cloth that hangs down to just above my knees. They only modestly cover my soft furry body, but allows me to move quick and agile in this wild and savage land. I travel light, carrying only a small curved short sword, a hunting knife, a light throwing spear and a short bow and a quiver of arrows. I also carry two water skins and on my back, I wear a small backpack, that holds a few things that I need out here to survive and what food I can find and carry with me, in it.

 I have traveled the plains alone, for over two seasons, after a falling out with my clan, over what a female, like me, can and can‘t do. I decided to show them all and after openly disputing our laws right in front of the entire clan and the elders, I then angrily left our little village for good and never looked back. I learned very quickly to survive, depending on my wits and my skills with the sword, knife, bow and spear. When I need food, I hunt during the day, remaining still in the tall savanna grass and moving slowly and stealthily up on my chosen prey, until I was close enough to throw my light spear or shoot my bow at them. I had become, over time, a very good hunter, even though my old clan said I could never be one, because I was just a female. They also said, I would never make it out here, on my own in the wild and would come crawling back to them. However, out here on my own, I found out that no one can tell me what I can do and what I can’t do, except me. I also quickly learned, out here in the wild, that my very life depended on, what I can do and must do to survive, or I would soon perish.

 Sometimes however, I find myself feeling all alone out here, as there are very few decent people that actually travel through the wild savanna plains of Narda. Those that did were usually cut throats, thieves, slavers or worse and couldn’t be trusted, so I never approach travelers, for fear of their intentions. As if that wasn’t bad enough, I had recently began finding strange tracks in the dirt of a kind unfamiliar to me. I would sometimes catch a glimpse of them, in the distance, moving in large groups of ten or more. From what I could see, they were riders of some kind dressed, in white robes and riding a strange two legged beast, that I had never seen before. I stayed out of their sight, as best I could and so far they hadn’t gotten close enough to discover me yet. Then one evening, while looking for a place to camp for the night, I heard the sounds of a terrible battle in the distance, to the south east of where I was. I kept myself hidden amongst the tall grass, listening to it warily, until it had finally ended.

 As the sun went down and the bright stars overhead came out, a full moon rose slowly, over the now cool savanna plains. Silence once more return and I then decided to have a look, at where the battle had taken place, to see if there was anything dropped, perhaps, during the battle, that I could make use of. I moved quietly and cautiously in that direction, soon discovered a large outcrop of rock that I had passed by many times before. Not far from it, I discovered a large, badly wounded wolf mount, barely alive and I almost killed it for food. But then, when I was about to strike, it stirred and looked right up at me, with the most beautiful blue gray eyes that I had ever seen before and they glinted brightly in the moonlight. I stayed my blade and began feeling pity for it, kneeling down beside it. I then looked its thick furred body over, thoroughly and discovered that it was a male and he had several horribly deep wounds, that were bleeding profusely, but not mortal. I mended his wounds closed, as best I could, with a bone needle and some crude thread that I carried with me in my pack. I then gave him some of my water, to drink and made him as comfortable, as I could, for the night. That’s when I thought I heard him say “T…Thank… you.” in a weak, but gruff sounding voice.

 I gasped and looked at him in amazement and then shook my head, deciding I had just imagined it. He smiled at me, closing his eyes and falling asleep and I found myself huddling close to him for warmth. The next day, I helped him move shakily over to the outcrop of rocks, for shade and protection under it. Over the next few weeks, I tended to him as best I could with what I had, while he slept soundly. I hunted during the day, to find us some food and water and then would tend to him at night, getting what sleep I could, when I could. Then one night, I was skinning a senar buck that I had just brought down that evening, when he awoke. He rolled over onto his stomach, watching at me, with mild amusement and I got up quickly and knelt beside him, checking his wounds. He looked up at me, while I tended to him and said “For a female… you are quite a good hunter and provider for me. You have also been kind and gently to me… taking care of me, beyond anything I deserve.”

 I gasped again, as I realized that I had heard him speak a few weeks ago and said “I… I just could not stand there and watch you die.” He cocked his head and said “Why not… if I had found you like that, I would have just finished you off and made you my next meal.” and he looked at me strangely. I gulped and said “B… because I just couldn’t bring myself to kill you, when you looked up at me, although I had thought about killing you, at first.” and I lowered my head in shame. He sat there for a moment in thought and then said “That was a sign of weakness, you know and it could have cost you your life, out here in the wild… but your kindness to me, has also provided you with a new ally this very night… so that makes up for it, I guess. I have learned something new this very night… and that is always good.”

 I smiled and said “So what do I call you, my big strong new ally?” He stood up, standing about four feet tall, from his broad strong thick furred shoulders to his thick clawed, furred paws and over seven feet long, from nose to tail tip. He bowed, just a bit shakily and said “I am called Kalieth and I am a Hestari war wolf, or was, before my rider and I fell in battle… and now… I am nothing.” He then looked down and said “He was dragged off dead, by the scavengers for food and I was left for dead in the hot searing sun, just out of reach of the shelter of the rocks.” He closed his eyes and a tear rolled down his soft furred cheek. I came up to him, putting my arms around him, to comfort him, saying “Well, I’m Tasla, you’re small new ally and also your friend, if you wish me to be.” He looked up at me and said “Friend? It sounds nice, but what does it mean?” I looked at him in his beautiful blue gray eyes and said “It means that we travel together and help one another survive and we care for one another, as I have cared for you these past several weeks.”

 He smiled and said “That sounds more like a mate to me.” and he cocked his head and smiled broadly at me. I blushed and said nervously “I… I guess you could look at it like that… IF… we were of the same race… but we are not, of course.” I got up, feeling a bit anxious and went back to skinning the senar buck, trying to avoid his gaze, as he watched me, curiously. Later that night, he got up, stepping out from under the rock and looked up at the full moon. He then began to howl, loudly and mournfully at it. The sound of it brought tears to my eyes, as I somehow realized it was a lament for his fallen rider. I walked up to him, warm tears flowing down my furred cheeks and placed a hand on his powerful shoulders, looking up at the moon with him. We then stood there, side by side, in silence a long time afterwards and then he finally said solemnly “I think, I know what you mean now, by friend, as I can tell you are now sharing my pain and my loss with me, as if it were your own.”

 He turned his big furred head and looked at me warmly, saying “I am your friend, now and forever Tasla.” I knelt down, in front of him and hugged him, nuzzling into him and said “And I am yours forever and always too.” I then got up, wiping the tears from my eyes, saying “Well I’d better finish that buck, or we will be starving together, as friends.“, and I went back and finished preparing the buck. After skinning it and cutting it up, I brought him some of the raw meat and sat down by him and ate some of it myself, enjoying the sweet taste of it‘s flesh. He stared at me, as he ate, making me feel a bit uncomfortable and I finally ask him “Why do you staring at me so, Kalieth?” He looked away, a bit embarrassed and said “I’m sorry, it just that, I have not seen your kind before. Where I am from, your kind do not venture and I was just admiring you for your earthly beauty.” I turned away embarrass and said “I’m sure, there are many females more beautiful than me, where you come from.”

 He turned back and as I looked back at him, he caught my gaze, looking deep in my eyes and said “I speak not, of the beauty of the flesh only, but of the soul as well and yours is very beautiful to me, Tasla and yet burns with a fierce inner fire. There is much about you, I wish to discover, but for now I must sleep.” He then got up wearily and went back to the rock and laid down. I sat there for a moment and finished eating, watching him sleep, with mixed emotions. I began to feel something stir inside of me, that I never felt before, but did not know what it was. I found myself getting up and laying down beside him, snuggling into his warm soft furred body. The smell of his wild musky male scent, permeated the air around me and I fell into a deep peaceful sleep breathing it in and smiling, knowing I would no longer be alone out here, in the wild.

 During the next several weeks, he healed up quickly and recovered his strength and health. When he was able, he started to teach me how to ride him, in case we ever needed to move fast. It was hard, at first, but I soon got the hang of it and we began having fun together, speeding through the tall savanna grass. Soon we were moving even faster across the grassy plains, as if we were of one body. He laughed one day, after we returned to the rock and said “I have to say, you’re so much lighter and more graceful, then my old rider. I almost do not know that you are even there, at all.” I dismounted him and said “How can you talk about your former rider so.” He looked away hurt and said “Yes, he was big part of me, but he is gone now and I must get on with my life; that is the way of nature, the way of Cajha.” I looked at him, feeling a bit playful and said “But what if something were too happened to me?”

 He looked long and deep into my eyes and then said “Then I would cease to be and would exist no longer, fading into the nothingness.” and then he turned quietly and walked slowly to the rock and laid down. I stood there stunned for a long time, not knowing how to feel, about his words. Then I began to feel warm inside and not because of savanna heat. I finally went to him and silently laid down behind him, putting my arm around him and nuzzling into him. I could hear his rapid heartbeat, but he did not move or turn to look at me at all. My eyes became wet with tears, as I suddenly realized the meaning of his words and now, of his silence. In his own way, Kalieth had grown to love me, more than just a friend, in these past several weeks. I laid there long, not knowing how to feel about him and fell into a troubled sleep, feeling a strange forbidden need enter into my mind.

 The next day, I had been riding him all morning, as we speed across the plains enjoying ourselves immensely. Then all of a sudden the rhythm of his stride began to make me feel very wet between my furred legs. Kalieth suddenly stopped at our rock and said “Tasla you are soaking the fur, on my back, what‘s wrong.” I looked at him, panting and blushing with embarrassment and said “I’m sorry Kalieth… but I can’t help it… your stride is making me very wet… for some reason.” He then sniffed the air around him and said “I know why… you’re in heat Tasla… I can smell your growing need.” I then got off of him and he quickly turn, placing his muzzle between my legs and sniff me deeply there. I push him away and said “Kalieth stop that.” but he just looked at me intently and said “But I can satisfied your need, Tasla, if you will only let me.” I could now see his growing erection emerging out of his sheath and swallowed hard. Part of me was wanting him, badly, but I found myself stepping back, afraid of him and said “Now Kalieth, calm yourself down.”

 He kept trying to move closer, but I continued to back away, until he had finally backed me into the rocks. Then once again he began to sniff me between my legs, making me gasp, as his nose slipped under my loincloth. I closed my eyes, as he began to lick me there, making me moan softly, as my forbidden desire for him grew stronger. Soon, I could not help myself any longer and quickly pulled off my top and loincloth, grabbing his thick furred head and rubbing my wet furred mound against his big wolf muzzle, as he licked me pleasurably. He licked me slowly for a long while making me moan deeply and then removed his soaked muzzle from my now very wet mound. He lifted his head to look deep into my eyes, expectantly and I found myself, breathlessly, going down on my hands and knees and lifting my tail for him. He took another long deep sniff and then mounted me quickly. I felt his hard wolf flesh touch my wet heated folds and my body trembled with longing desire.

 I then heatedly pushed back hard, into him and cried out in pain, giving him my virginity and taking him deep inside of me. I felt unashamed, about what I was now doing, as I suddenly realized, I truly loved him too, with all my heart. He began to gently mate me, giving me what I needed most, right now and making me moan with deep growing pleasure. Soon he began to move forward and lifted his hind leg over me and making me roll over forward on my back. He continued to move forward, his hard wolf flesh, still lodged deep inside of me, until I laid upside down on my back with my legs spread wide around his thick soft furred rump. He then began to thrust down even deeper into me, driving me crazy with extreme pleasure, as his hard wolf flesh repeatedly tapped something deep inside of me. As we became more sexually excited, our combined love juices began to flow down my soaking wet mound to my belly and then flowed towards my small soft furry breasts, pooling there. He then began to thrusting into me with immense vigor, making my tongue loll from my mouth from raw lustful pleasure.

 I was loving every bit of it and bucked my hips wildly, wanting to feel him fill me with his warm creamy wolf love. His thrusts grew more urgent and I hadn’t long to wait, as he finally pushed deep into me, howling loudly. He then filled my heated womb with his hot wolf love, making me orgasm so hard, I almost passed out. I laid there, in a deep foggy haze, as his warm flowing love filled me. When he had finished, he eased his rump down, lowering my rump to the warm ground. He then moved forward, pulling his sated wolf flesh from my now very satisfied body. I laid there in a pleasure filled fog, as he turned around and began to lick me clean, making me giggle and squirm. I looked up at him with deep love in my eyes and said “Now… Kalieth… we are also mates… now and forever.”

 He smiled and laid down beside me, laying his big furry head between my small trembling, soft furred breasts and I hugged it lovingly. Then as I was falling into a deep, contented sleep, I heard him say “Not yet, my love, not yet.” When I finally awoke, it was dark, except for the light of the full moon. I looked all around, but could not find him anywhere and then got up and cried out desperately for him. I then heard him softly say “Come to me, my love.” from somewhere above me. I looked up and saw him standing there, on the rocks above me, silhouetted by the full moon and I felt warm tingles, between my legs, for him. I went around and climbed the rock and went to him swiftly, hugging him tightly, saying “I thought you had left me, Kalieth.” He looked lovingly at me and said “I could never do that, my love. Now please lie here and let me make love to you, once more.”

 He jumped off a raised piece of rock that he was standing on and let me lay down on it, on my back. I spread my legs for him, feeling no shame, no guilt and no apprehension, this time, only a deep warm love for him. He covered me and I felt his hard wolf flesh, slip gently into me once more. I closed my eyes, as he pushed deep into me and I wrapped my soft furred legs around his thick furred waist. He licked my cheek and started to gently mate with me, once more. A warm glowing sensation spread over my entire body, as he loved me passionately. I open my eyes and stared into those beautiful blue gray eyes of his, that now seemed to glow, with their own inner light, as he smiled down at me. His hard wolf flesh felt so warm and pleasurable, moving slowly inside of me. It began making me feel very warm and tingly inside, as if some powerful magic, was at work.

 I closed my eyes again, as the feeling grew stronger with each slow gentle thrust, as he began to nibble playfully on my neck, sending warm sparks shooting through my heated body. I began moaning loudly and tightened my grip on him, as the pleasure became so intense, I could barely contain myself. Suddenly I arched my back, throwing my head back and began to shake wildly. I then cried out “Oh Kalieth!!!” and orgasmed hard, digging my claws into his thick furred back. He then began thrusting urgently into me and I held onto him moaning loudly and bucking my hips wildly. Then time stood still, as he thrust deep into me, howling loudly and I then felt his hot creamy wolf love flowing quickly into my hungry womb.

 Unlike before, I felt a strange feeling emanating from my womb that made my whole body flush with its tremendous warmth. Kalieth held himself deep inside of me, his hard fleshy knot pressing firmly against wet trembling folds, my neck held gently in his mouth, while he finished consummating our love for each other. I could feel his strong muscular wolf body, trembling with exhaustion above me, as he gave all of himself to me. He finally released my neck and spoke weakly, saying “Now… we are mates… by the blessing of the… Moon Mother, Cajha… we are now bound together… now and forever… even beyond death itself.” and he licked my flushed face lovingly. I opened my eyes weakly and looked up at him and he seemed to glow above me in the moonlight, his thick furred mane flowing wild and free, all around him, in the cold night breeze. As he smiled down contentedly at me, I caressed he strong muscular shoulders and said “I feel somehow different inside, Kalieth… a strange warmth inside me, unlike before, when you first loved me.”

 He looked up at the moon and said “The Moon Mother has blessed our union and allowed me to give my seed to you. It has now taken root inside of you and soon you will bear our fruit.” I looked up at him in great surprise and love, saying “You mean I’m pregnant with your child?” He nodded, smiling at me and I hugged him tightly and said “Oh Kalieth, I love you so much, but how can that be?” He laughed and said “With moon magic, of course, but it only works when the bond of love is strong and true enough.” and then he looked lovingly into my eyes. We laid there on the rock holding onto each other, long after his sated wolf flesh had slipped out of me and retreated back into his sheath. He laid on top of me, licking me long and lovingly and I laid there beneath him caressing his strong muscular wolf body, nuzzling into him.

 Finally he moved back from between my legs and I sat up, rubbing my warm belly. I smiled up at him and said “I wonder what our pups will look like.” He shook his head and said “Only the Moon Mother knows, but I’m sure they will be a little like the both of us, strong warriors and yet compassionate.” He then turned slowly, walking away and I followed close behind him, looking back and seeing the large wet spot where we had just made love, sparkling in the moonlight and smiled, rubbing the warmth in my belly once more. We got down from our rock and then, for a long time, we walked together in the moonlight, through the tall savanna grass, side by side. Just before dawn, we finally retreated to our rock and slept together, until midday.

Chapter 2 - Scavengers of the Plains

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 We awoke to a sound in the distance, a kind of low rumbling sound. We both got up quickly and climbed up on our rock, staying low and looking out on the open plains. We saw many animal driven carts heading eastward across the savanna, with riders on animals moving quickly around them to protect them. I looked at Kalieth and ask “Who are they, do you know?” He shook his head and said “Fools, just fools, who want to incur the wrath of the scavengers, in the name of a profit. They will only find a quick death here.” I looked at him and then back at them and said “Should we try to warn them?” He continued looking at them and said “They knew the risk of crossing the savanna, way before their journey began. News, about these scavengers, had traveled as far as the great city of Climan Sol.” I looked at him in astonishment and said “You both had traveled far to a lot of distance cities, haven‘t you and your rider?”

 He turned to look at me with a smile, remembering better times with his rider and said “I have worn off more layers of skin on my paw pads then I care to mention. I had seen many things, even before I met my rider, but when I accepted him as my rider, I saw more wondrous things then I could have imagined. At first, my rider and I use to do, as those riders do, protecting merchant caravan and we traveled far and wide with them to strange and unusual places. Later, we traveled to other distant lands together, seeking fortune and adventure and were… inseparable… that is until…” then he lowered his head and I hugged him, feeling his pain of loss again well up him. I watched the carts and riders over his shoulders and then felt a yearning take hold of me, as it did when I decided to leave my village, long ago and said “Maybe we can go seeking adventure and visit faraway lands too.”

 He looked at me and said “You’re not ready for such things. The world would swallow you whole.” I looked at him angrily and said “That’s what the village elders told me when I asked to leave and yet I have survived this harsh lands for over two seasons.” He moved up to me quickly, surprising me and looked deep into my eyes, sniffing me and then snorted in surprise and said “Yes… yes… you do have the fire of a Hestari wolf rider…” he then walked around me slowly and continued “but not the skills needed to survive battle yet.” He then stood in front of me and looked, as if coming to some great decision and said “Tomorrow you and I will begin our training, but for now we will go and meet with those merchants. Gather your things.”

 I excitedly gathered my few possessions, putting on my top and loincloth, once more and mounted him and he looked back and said “Lesson one, always keep your eyes open. These merchants will be attracting a lot of attention to themselves, from thieves, robbers and worse, the scavengers, so be on your guard.” We then headed out quickly across the plains and soon we caught up with the slow moving caravan, as it stopped for the night, to set up camp. The guards on the animals quickly saw us and headed us off, then surrounded us. They all wore red leather armor, with a golden wolf’s head on their chest and banners. They were riding large cat like creature that roared menacingly at our approach. I was frightened of them, but Kalieth was fearless in their presents. A large humanoid warthog obviously the leader of the guards looked at me and laugh, saying “Now what have we here, a little doggy girl on big doggy.”

 Kalieth looked at him and said “Say that again pig and I will make barbeque out of you and your little pussy cat and pick my teeth with your bones.” and gave him such a look that it made the warthog back his mount. Kalieth looked around and then said, in a commanding voice “We have come to warn you all to be on guard and watchful of the wild scavengers that roam these lands. They attack in large groups and are wicked foes to deal with if you’re not familiar with plains of Narda. My rider know this area very well and offers our assistance to you.” The warthog laughed and said “I’m not afraid of your scavengers, let them come and we don’t need help from… a…” he started to say something and then though better of it and said “you.” Kalieth turned and walked away saying “Fine… it’s your death… may Cajha have mercy on you.”

 Suddenly another rider rode up and said “By Cajha! Kalieth is that you?” and he dismounted quickly, removing his helmet to reveal his grey wolf’s head. The warthog moved back to let him by, snorting in displeasure. Kalieth turned quickly upon hearing him and bowed deeply, saying “Prince Lumbard, a pleasant surprise, as always. So you are leading this caravan, I might have known.” Prince Lumbard looked at me and then back at him and said “Kalieth where is your rider, Sir Greggor.” Kalieth lowered his head and said “He has fallen to the very scavengers that we were trying to warn your guards about.” The Prince looked troubled and said “But yet you survived.” I looked at him and said shakily “I… I found him dying of his wounds… and the heat… and mended his wounds… nursing him back to health.”

 The Prince looked up at me, smiling pleasantly and said “And who is this lovely creature?” Kalieth growled and said “This is Tasla my new rider and also my mate.” The guards drew their swords and bows, pointing them at Kalieth and me, but the Prince just laughed and raised his hand and they put them away, much to my relief. He walked up unafraid and patted Kalieth on his muscular shoulder and said “Sorry old boy, I did not know, you sly old Hestari wolf.” Upon hearing this, many of the guards began to talk among themselves and even the warthog raised an eyebrow. I began to feel privileged just to be riding on him, let alone being his mate. The Prince turned around and said loudly “This is Kalieth the most fearsome Hestari wolf known in the three wolf kingdoms and his lovely rider. Treat them both with the respect due mighty warriors.”

 He then motioned for us to follow him and everyone moved aside to give us room. I felt ten feet tall, riding on Kalieth, as all eyes were on us both. The Prince led us to his tent and I dismounted, then we all went inside. I sat down on a pillow, brought to me by a beautiful she-wolf, as Kalieth laid down on a large soft mat brought and spread before him by another. The prince sat down on a low chair on the other side of a table and said “Tell me of these scavengers that could take on the likes of you and Sir Greggor.” Kalieth looked at him earnestly and said “They ride slitherlings, a very fast, agile and deadly lizard that roam the southern swamps and the riders themselves are cunning warriors. Other than that, I know very little, as they wore flowing robes and cover their faces. I was in a troop of five mounts, all as good as me and Sir Greggor and they just cut us down like we were nothing. I too would be dead now, if Tasla had not found me and healed me.”

 Then he narrowed his eyes and continued “One thing we did discovered, but unfortunately to late, was that the slitherlings were tough against swords and axes, but are very susceptible to arrows and piercing weapons.” Kalieth then looked at him sternly and then finished “So mainly use your archers and lancers to bring them down and your fighters to finish their riders.” The prince was listening intently and then said “I will let my captain of the guard know all this at once.” and he got up and left the tent. We were brought a generous plate of food and drink and I look over at him and said “You are really famous and a great warrior.” He looked unimpressed and said “I have little need for praise and desire it not. My fierceness and strength on the field of battle is all I need, to makes my enemies flee before me, not words. Although I fell, that night, I killed many of them before their sheer numbers overcame me at last, while I stood atop a mound of their dead.”

 The look in his eyes frighten me at first and then I realized he might be right in saying I was not ready for battle. He seemed to sense my thoughts and said “Only when you are tried and tested in the heat of battle will you know if you are truly ready for it. Have faith in your abilities, your strengths and trust in me, your mount and we will be fearsome and unstoppable together.” We then ate, but I ate very little and drank only water, knowing that it would only slowed me down, if I had to fight tomorrow. After we ate, we said good night to the Prince and Kalieth and I moved off a ways from the camp and laid down to sleep in the cover of the tall grass. He moved close beside me and whispered in my ear “I am able to sleep light and will hear anything coming, so sleep untroubled my mate, I will be watching over you.”

 It was a while, however, before I finally fell asleep, watching him protect me and realized I was truly safe out here, as long as he was near. I awoke the next day to the sound of trumpets and shot up like a light, already Kalieth was awake, looking at the camp from just above the grass, grumbling to himself. As I approached him, I heard him say “Fools, they’re going to bring them all down on us.” He turned his head and looked at me and said “Are you ready for your training, my love?” I nodded and gathered my stuff and we went into the camp, as they were preparing to leave. Kalieth got some more arrows, some targets and some poles from the Prince’s supplies for my training. Then we went out on the plains and set up the targets, as the caravan began to move out.

 I was then trained, by Kalieth on shooting my bow and throwing my spear while riding him. We moved quickly, changing direction through the tall grass around them, as I tried to hit the targets. We moved slowly at first until I got the hang of it and then he sped up. He was greatly surprised that I could even hit the target, if not always on the mark, which at least saved us looking for the arrows. I looked smugly at him and said “I can shoot a moving senar buck or doe while they are at full gallop, this is only reversed. The target is still and we are moving.” He smiled and said “What if both are moving?” The smugness of my face disappeared and he laughed and said “Not so sure about that, are you, my cocky little mate. Let’s go and find out.”

 We left the targets and followed the direction the caravan was going, following their tracks. Kalieth said as we trotted along “The caravan will be frightening the senar, let’s see if you can bring one down while we are moving. We can then use it to barter for more arrows and things we might need.” After a while we saw a small herd of them running towards us and gave chase. Several times we got close and several times I missed and I was starting to get frustrated. Kalieth then stopped and stood there panting and said “Relax… your trying to hard… breath slowly and feel me… moving below you… follow the senar… and then lead it… then loose your arrow… as if you are lunging… at it yourself.”

 We tried again and this time, when I got close once more, I calmed myself and time seemed to slow for me and I felt Kalieth’s great muscular body moving beneath me and took aim. I looked at the senar, as if it were me attacking it and then let my arrow fly. I saw it fall, as we passed it by and my heart soared. Kalieth stopped and let out a mighty howl of triumph, as I jumped off and went back to the senar. I was surprised to find that I had gotten a head shot and had killed it instantly. He walked slowly up to me and said “Now that was a great shot, my mate and rider. More shots like that one and we will not have to worry about the scavengers at all.” I tied it to Kalieth and hopped back on him and we continued to follow the caravan.

 Suddenly Kalieth stopped, sniffing the ground and growled, saying “Scavenger scouts are tracking the caravan, we must hurry.” and bolted off after them. I held onto him with my legs leaning forward and set my bow, readying myself for my first test in battle, my heart already pounding in my ears. Kalieth moved swiftly and silently through the tall savanna grass and soon we were upon them before they even knew we were there. I loosed an arrow and caught one of the riders square between its robed shoulders, dropping it. The others, now aware of our presents, split off in different directions and then attacked us from all sides. I dodge a sword slash by one, but another one hit us with its slitherling’s hard chest, on Kalieth’s lift side and I was thrown off of him. I rolled some distance and came up quickly on my feet, drawing my short sword, as another charged me.

 I dropped to my knees and slashed at the slitherling’s legs and managed to cut through one of them, bring it and it’s rider to the ground. Kalieth came out of nowhere and mauled the rider to death, as it screamed loudly. Kalieth turned his bloodied face to me and ran towards me, yelling “Get on quickly.” and I jumped back on him, as he passed and drew my bow once more. Kalieth headed in the direction of the caravan, while the other three scavengers gave pursuit. I pointed my bow back and shot another rider in the chest and it fell hard, trampled by the slitherling behind it, almost tripping that one up, but only managed to slow it down. I saw the closest one draw a bow and quickly grabbed the grip on Kalieth’s harness and motioned with my left foot for him dodge to the left and he did, as the arrow whizzed by us both. Kalieth turned again and charged him, before he could set another arrow and I undid my light spear from his halter and aimed it. As it started to fit another arrow to its bow, I loosed my spear, catching the slitherling’s head squarely, going through it and plunging deep into its rider’s chest, as well. Both hit the ground hard, as we passed them by and we quickly came upon the last rider.

 It turned quickly and we gave pursuit and Kalieth growled menacingly and said “We need to catch it… before it can tell the others… about the caravan.” Its slitherling was fast, but Kalieth was faster and we quickly caught up, but just as I loosed my arrow, it veered quickly, being missed by my arrow and charged strait at us. I drew my sword, but it drove its slitherling right into Kalieth, instead of going past him. It hit Kalieth hard and I was once more thrown off of him, as he was thrown back and hit the ground. The rider also hit the ground, not far from me, but was on his feet quickly. The slitherling laid still, on top of Kalieth, its neck, clearly broken and Kalieth was not moving ether. The rider ignored me and picked up its long sword and walked over to Kalieth, raising it up to run him through. A rage welled up in me and I drew my hunting knife and charged it. I screamed with a wild savage rage, baring my teeth and causing it to hesitate and I jumped on its back and slashed at its throat.

 Blood splashed everywhere and I fell with it to the ground and then stabbed it savagely, in the back, several times, until it no longer moved. I then I sat back, tears flowing down my cheeks, my body shaking and my heart pounding, looking over at Kalieth. Then I noticed him slowly moving and rushed to his side, helping him out from under the slitherling. I then held him tightly and crying and said “Oh Kalieth I thought you were dead.” He put a forepaws around me and in a soft voice said “Calm yourself my love.” and suddenly I felt at peace and sat back and looked at him, tears still flowing from my eyes and said “I thought I had lost you Kalieth and then it came at you with its sword to finish you off and I went mad or something and attacked it, slashing its throat and stabbed it furiously many times. It was horrible.” and I began to tremble again.

 He whispered in my ear again “Calm yourself, my love… I’m unharmed… a little dazed, but unharmed, none the less. It was the blood fury that you felt. My kind often use it in battle, but I don’t know how it could have affected you, unless it was through our bond.” I looked at him still crying and said “All I could think of was stopping him from ending your life, nothing else in this world mattered to me, not even my own life.” I closed my eyes a hugged him tightly, nuzzling into him. He held me with his forepaws, until I stopped shaking and then said “You have done very well this day, my fierce mate, you would have made a fine Hestari she-wolf. But we must catch up with the caravan and let the Prince know of this, if he doesn‘t know about it already.”

 I went over to the bloodied body of the rider and removed its helmet and gasped, finding a lizard like head beneath it. Kalieth came over, looking at it closely and I looked at him and said “What is it?” He shook his head and said “I don’t know, I’ve never seen anything like it before, in all the three wolf kingdoms. We need to get to the caravan and tell the Prince about this at once. Then we will go to Salidar, the closest wolf kingdom, bordering these lands and let the king there know about this, as well. He will surely want to know about this evil new race pillaging on his borders.” I then gathered what I could find on it that would fit into my pack. I then climbed on Kalieth, holding him tightly and we were off like a shot, him feeling the urgent need for speed.

 Thankfully we came upon the caravan, still moving slowly and unharmed. A few of the riders came up on us and looked at us in total dismay, as we were still covered in blood from the battle. Then the warthog came up saying “All right what’s going…” and stopped and looked at us alarmed. Kalieth then spoke “You were being tracked by scouts of the scavengers, I spoke of yesterday, but we were able to kill them all before they could tell their leaders. Their bodies are some distance back the way you came. Where is the Prince?” The warthog motioned for us to follow him and he led us to him quickly. He rode up looking us over and he said “What happened my friend?” Kalieth looked at him earnestly and said “We came upon a scavenger scouting party, tracking the caravan and fell upon them, killing them before they could escape and tell the others.”

 Kalieth stopped talking to give the Prince time to absorb that, before hitting him with what he had to say next “We found out that they are some kind of lizard like race.” The Prince stared at him confounded and then said “Are you sure?” Kalieth nodded and said “The bodies are some distance back from where you came, if you wish to see them.” The Prince nodded and looked at the captain of the guard and said “Put the caravan on alert, I’m going to see this for myself, wait for my return.” We then lead the Prince swiftly to where we had battled the scavengers. The Prince looked them over and stopped at the ones pinned together, with my spear and looked up at me and said “You did this?” Kalieth laughed and said “Well, my friend, I sure didn’t do it.” and I giggled and jumped down and retrieved my spear.” The Prince laughed and nodded at me, saying “Quite impressive.”

 After looking at the others, we came up to the last one we fought and the prince looked at the slashed and stabbed body and looked at me again “You did this too?” I nodded, and lowered my head, saying “He was going to kill Kalieth and I had to stop him.” I then turned away not wanting to look him in the eyes. The prince said “The King of Salidar, my father, must be made aware of this new threat, at once.” Kalieth looked at the dead rider and said” I was planning to take Tasla and do just that.” The Prince patted him on the shoulders and said “I knew I could count on you, my friend. I will go back to the caravan and you should head for Salidar as soon as possible.” Kalieth said “Will you be alright, my friend?” He jumped up on his mount and padded its side and said “No slitherling is a match for Allerax and you have shown us now what to look for, my friend. Go swiftly and may Cajha be with you both.”

Chapter 3 - The Road to Salidar

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 The Prince then sped off towards the caravan and Kalieth look at me and said “Well you said you wanted to visit far away cities, so let’s get moving, my mate.” I strapped down my things tightly on his halter and hopped up on his back and we then sped off westward towards Salidar. As Kalieth passed by our rock, I wondered to myself, if I would ever see it again and rubbed my belly. We traveled far the first day, stopping only a few times to drink some water and eat what food I had on me, which wasn’t much. As dusk approached we stopped by a small pool of water and Kalieth said “Let me try it first to see if it is any good.” I smiled at him and said “You don’t have to be so gallant, my love, I can tell if the water is good or not with this.” and reached into my bag and pulled out a small bottle of powdered senar bone and then collected some of the water in a small bowl. I then sprinkled some of the powder into it and the water remained clear and I said “The water is fine for us to drink.”

 He looked into the little bowl and said “How can you tell if the water is good, simply by putting some powder in it?” and he looked at me curiously.” I showed him the bottle and said “When you pour some of this powdered senar bone in the water, it will show you any impurities or poisons in it, by turning a deep red.” He looked at me with surprise and said “How did you learn such a thing?” I smiled and filled my water skins and said “My old clan’s shaman use to teach me many things, when no one else was around. He was the only one there, who felt I could be something special, if given half a chance. When he found out I was leaving, he gave me a scrolls, with many useful things, like this, written on it.” He raised his head, in astonishment and said “You can read, as well?” I nodded swelling with pride and said “I can even write too.”

 He looked at me anew and said “You are something truly special, I knew that when we first met and now I’m sure of it. You’re also my rider, my mate and especially the mother of my future offspring and that makes you even more special to me, my love.” I hugged him tightly and kissed him for the first time on his black lips and he touch his lips with his forepaw and said “I don‘t know what you call that, but I like it.” I kissed him again and looked deep into his bright blue gray eyes and said “It‘s called a kiss, it‘s used to show affection to someone you love.” He then gave me a long meaningful lick on my muzzle and said “That’s how my kind show affection to someone we love.” and I smiled, putting my arms around his thick neck and gave him a long slow sensual lick on his big black nose. He let out a lustful growl and tackled me to the ground, moving down between my legs and giving me many long slow sensual licks there. We then made long slow sensual love in the tall savanna grass, as the sun set. The air grew cold, but we were not, making sweet love to each other, as the stars twinkled above the cool savanna plains. We then fell asleep, cuddled into each other’s warm soft furred bodies, full of blissful love for each other.

 The next morning we got up feeling hungry and decided to hunt for food. We headed westward and came along a small herd of dromo, a wild woolly creature of the plains, bigger than a senar and more dangerous, with big horns. We stalked them for a while, finding a last, one straying from the herd. We moved up on it slowly and I took aim with my light spear and hit it in the chest, from the side. It ran trailing blood and we gave chase, Kalieth catching up with it and lunging at it, while I jumped off of him, and brought it to the ground. It cried out, as Kalieth held it and I slit its throat with my short sword. It stopped moving, but we now had another problem, the dromo’s cry had alerted the herd and a large male, obviously the leader, came and roared in anger.

 I took a stand drawing my hunting knife, also and Kalieth growled menacingly, baring his large fangs. It charged us and we split up, not wanting to kill it, but chase it away from our spoil. It turned to chase me and I turned and ran like my life depended on it, which right now it did!! It’s attention was on me, so it didn’t see Kalieth coming up from the side and then he hit it, jumping on it back and toppling it to the grown hard. It rolled over and laid there breathing hard looking up at Kalieth. Kalieth growl fiercely at him and it then shot up like a light and bolted off back to the herd and I began to breathe again. Kalieth, turned and looked at me angrily and growled out “You must strike faster, the male would have not been alerted to us, if you had just been quicker.” and I lowered my head, feeling angry at myself and realizing he was right.

 We could have been seriously hurt, by that dromo male, if he had gored one of us with those big horns. He came up to me and said more softly” Sorry my love, but if you want to be my rider, I must discipline you, as your instructor, our survival will depends on it. You are a fine rider, my love and will be great someday, but it will take time.” I looked at him and said “I know you are right Kalieth, that‘s what makes me angry. I’m trying so hard to impress you, and not taking our training, as seriously as I should. I’m sorry Kalieth.” He put a paw on my shoulder and said “You have taken the first step to being a great Hestari wolf rider. Discipline is the key, you must train yourself, with what I teach you. To hear it only is not to necessarily learn it. It must lived as well, to be learned properly.”

 I nodded and said “I will, Kalieth, I promise.” and turned and walked towards the dromo we took down. I could feel him watching me, as I walked away feeling down, for disappointing him. As I skinned the dromo female, I looked at it and realized, this could be me, if I continue try to do things on my own. It had wondered off by itself and now was dead, because it had to do thing its own way. I had grown strong on my own all these years, depending on myself. However, if I had been attacked by these scavengers in the wild by myself, I would be as dead as this dromo female. But with Kalieth’s training and help, we had taken on five of them and prevailed. As I cut up the dromo, I decided to not wind up like her and would take Kalieth training to heart and trust him, truly making him proud someday.

 We ate in silence for a time and he looked up at me and said “You are quiet, my love, I have been much too hard on you.” I looked into his eyes and said “No, my love, you are right. If I’m going to travel with you in this world and live to bear your offspring, I must learn what you teach and use it.” He nodded and said “Yes… yes… you are learning, my love, I am pleased.” He smiled and then looked to the west and said” We must leave here soon, if we wish to get to Salidar. It‘s border is still a league, or more away, but we may get close before nightfall.” I got up and stood there by him, looking westward and said “What will we find there Kalieth?” His laughed and said “Adventure galore, my love, more then you could ever want. But we must be on guard, for not all people there are friendly and some might try to harm us. Thieves and rogues lie in wait on the roads and forests to attack the unwary travelers and take their possessions. They also use little females like you for their pleasure or to sell them to slavers.”

 I bared my teeth and said “Let then try, they will find their ball lying in the dirt.” Kalieth smiled broadly and said excitedly “That’s the sprit, my love! Now let us get a move on.” I salted and wrapped what meat I could put in my pack, in some tanga leaves. I often kept them in my pack to help keep meat fresh to a day or two. I then tied down my full water skins and my light spear, to his harness and climbed onto Kalieth. He then headed westward and we ran like the wind across the plains and my heart soared, as it always did when we ran like this. We watched the herds of senar, dromo and other plains animals and birds take flight, at our approach. We made good time and by nightfall we could barely make out a distant line of trees. I had never seen so many trees in one place, in my life, as the plain’s trees were sparse and far between.

 We then stopped for the night by a wide river that separated us from the forest. I looked at Kalieth, as I dismounted and said “How will we ever get past that.” and pointed to the river. He looked south and said “To the south there is a bridge, over the Emeron River, nearby, guarded by the king’s guard. It will be safe to cross there.” We then sat silently and ate the raw meat that I had brought with us and drank some water, before we finally bedding down for the night. Kalieth looked at me and said “Tomorrow we will be entering the lands, belonging to the King of Salidar. Follow my lead, when in the presents of his guards and especially in his presents, if we ever get that far. Do not take anything that we don’t pay for, when in this land. Keep your eyes open for trouble and do what I tell you to do. I know these lands well and know how to behave and react to trouble in them.”

 I nodded and said “How long has it been sense you were last here?” he thought about a moment and said “At least five months or more.” I looked at him concerned and said “What if things have changed, as people often do.” He looked into my eyes deeply and said “Then just simply trust me, as I trust in you, my love.” I smiled and nodded snuggling in him and said “I do trust you, my love.” He got up and laid down in the tall grass and I laid down beside him and held him lovingly. We then snuggled into each other and nuzzled each other, listening to the sounds of the river and a few night birds. I felt safe and warm by his side, but was still a bit troubled about what tomorrow would bring. I wished I could be as assured, as Kalieth was, but an uncomfortable feeling began to stir in my mind, an unknown dread and I fell into a troubled sleep.

 I was awaken, sometime in the night, by the sounds of something trying to move silently through the grass, towards us and looked over at Kalieth to find him already alerted, but he remaining very still. It was still very dark and I quietly climbed onto his back and drew my short sword, grabbing the grip on his harness and we waited, silently. I could feel Kalieth’s muscles tense beneath me and tightened my grip on him, as he prepared to leap to the attack. Suddenly, they were on us, but Kalieth sprang forward, knocking one down and trampling it, as he ran over it. I slashed at another with my short sword, felling a warm splash of its blood on my leg, as it cried out. The others were taken completely by surprise, but turned to engage us. Kalieth let out a fierce roar, as he turned to them and some of our attackers fled, leaving only six, to engage us in battle. In the dark I couldn’t tell what they were, but I knew they were not scavengers.

 Four of them charged us again, but two held back drawing their bows. I motioned Kalieth to dodge right and an arrow whizzed by my head, but another, meant for his chest hit Kalieth in the shoulder instead, making him stumble a bit, but he still charged their ranks. I grabbed my short bow and quickly fitted an arrow and fire at one of the archers, hitting him in the shoulder, spinning him around. I then held Kalieth, leaning forward against him, as he hit one of the fighters, biting into his throat and dodging a sword strike by another. He dragged its now lifeless body some distance away and dropped it, turning only to be hit by another arrow in the rump. I saw red and quickly fitted another arrow and let it fly, catching the other archer in the head with it and he hit the ground.

 Dawn was breaking and the fighters were upon us now and Kalieth battled the large one, while the other two came at me. I dodged the one’s sword strike, but the other tackled me to the ground and held me there. I could see now that it was a coyote and he grinned and said “I’m going to have fun using you for my pleasure, dog.” I grit my teeth, grabbing my hunting knife and said “Have fun with this!” and ran him through with it and then kicked him off of me with my feet. He was flung back, but the other was ready for me and slashed at me while I was still on the ground, I rolled, but the edge of his blade sliced my back, cutting through my leather top, as well. I stood up and my top fell to the ground exposing my soft furry breasts. He hesitated, staring at them and I swung around and kicked him in his nuts, dropping him. I leaned down picking up my top, giving him yet another kick to the head, knocking off his leather helmet and laying him out. I looked at him, apparently a feline and said “Males.” and picked up my short bow and went to help Kalieth.

 He was locked in mortal combat with a large bear and they were going at it with tooth and nail. The bear was large, but Kalieth was a fierce fighter and seemed more skilled. I fitted my arrow and was trying to shoot the bear, but they were to close together, to get a clear shot. Then suddenly, I was tackled from behind by the archer that I had shot in the shoulder earlier. He was a black wolf and was very strong and rolled me over and held me down with my hands above my head and said “Now your mine. “I then felt something touch me between my legs and screamed out “NO!!” Then I heard a roar like death itself and looked up to see Kalieth lunge at the bear’s throat and rip out a chunk of it. Blood splattered everywhere and he turned his bloodied maw towards us and I hardly recognized his face, so savage and terrible it was to behold. I closed my eyes, forgetting all about the wolf and trembled, beneath him.

 His body was swept off of me and I heard his horrible screams, as Kalieth ripped him apart. I laid there my body trembling with fear, until there was nothing but a dead silence. I heard him quietly approach, but dare not to look up at him, until I heard him say in a gentle voice “Tasla you are safe now, my love.” I looked up and saw, once more, my Kalieth, covered in blood and smiling at me, as if nothing had happened. I got up and slowly looked around and then spotted the body of the bear and the mangled body of the wolf and hid my face. I then heard him say solemnly “The blood fury, inside of me, is a terrible thing to use and I only use it when I have to, fearing it myself, sometimes. But I know how to control the rage inside of me and would never attack an ally or…” and he lifted my head with his gentle forepaw and continued “…someone I loved dearly.”

 I then through my arms around him and cried into his bloodied fur and he winced a bit, as my arm brushed the arrow in his muscular shoulder. I quickly grabbed my pack off of him and took out a bottle of junamint, a mild local numbing paste for bad wounds such as this. As soon as I applied it to the wound, Kalieth began to relax and I was able to just pull the arrow out. I looked at it and he said “Don’t touch it… its poisoned. “, and I quickly stuck it in the ground and said “What do I do, I don’t have anything for poisons.” Kalieth than said “Don’t worry, my love, I’m immune to its affects, but it stings quite a bit, that’s how I know it’s there.” I breathed a sigh of relief and said “What about the one in your rump?” He looked back at it, half broken off, but still stuck in him and said “That one‘s not poisoned.” I rubbed some more of the junamint on that wound too and waited for him to relax and then pulled the broken arrow, out of him as well.

 As I began to tend to his other wounds I noticed many scars on his body and said “You’ve been in many battles, haven’t you Kalieth?” He sighed, looking at me tiredly and said “More than I ever wanted to be in. Sometimes I grow weary of it, then other times I relish it. But it is part of me and what I am, whether I like it or not.” then he looked at me, while I was tending him and said “The time I spent with you at our rock, however showed me another aspect of my life that I had all but forgotten. I hope to return there, with you some day, raise our children and live out the rest of my live with you, in peace, love and the blessings of Cajha.” Then he looked eastward and said “But first I must make our land safe for us and chase these scavengers back to where they came from. Only then can we find peace there, at our rock.”

 I put my arms around him and said “You mean we must make our land safe.” and he laughed and said “Yes, we.” he then put his paw on my shoulder and I was suddenly reminded of the slash on my back and winced a bit. He looked at me and said “Your hurt, let me look.” I turned my back to him and said “It’s only a scratch.” He looked at it and sniffed, saying “The mightiest warrior can die from a scratch, if it is poisoned. However this one is not.” and then he began to lick it clean. I closed my eyes, loving the feeling of his soft warm wolf tongue moving along my soft furred back. Any pain, I was feeling, slowly went away replaced by a warm feeling inside of me, for him. He finished and said “There that should help, it’s not too bad though, but your top seems to be missing.” I looked down at my bare breasts and realized I must have dropped it, when the black wolf tackled me. I got up and went to where he had tried to take me and found it laying there.

 When I reached down and picked it up, something caught my eye from where the remains of the black wolf laid. I got up and walked over to it, trying not to look at the body and picked up a piece of his red leather chest plate. To my horror, it was a golden wolf’s head. I ran back to Kalieth with it and showed it to him. He looked at it, then went over to the bear’s body and said “These were the king’s men, but it cannot be, they behaved, and fought like roughs not knights. Something’s amiss here.” That’s when I remembered the feline I had knocked out, but did not killed and said “There is a feline I had knocked unconscious back there, if he has not awakened yet, maybe he can shed some light on this.” Kalieth nodded and I lead him to the unconscious feline, fixing me top, as best I could and putting it back on.

Chapter 4 - A New Enemy Discovered

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 He was still there, just starting to craw onto his hands and knees, when we came up on him and Kalieth said in a gruff voice “Don’t move or I will be forced to make you my next meal.” The feline froze and slowly turned and then flipped over onto his back and held a hand up. He then looked at Kalieth, as if not believing his eyes and said “Kalieth?” in a feminine voice. I looked at Kalieth and said “You know this ruffian?” He looked at me and then back at the feline and said “This is no ruffian, this is Karenna; one of the kings best and most trusted guards, or was.” I looked at her closely and could suddenly tell, that indeed she was a female. Her armor made her look like just another male soldier and her main was cut short. She looked up at us sadly and said “I am still loyal to king Rubin, but he has been overthrown by another wolf named Gathla and I am forced to travel with these vile roughs to find out what happened to him.”

 Kalieth looked troubled and said “What do you mean, he was overthrown.” Katreena got up on shaky legs and said “All I know at this point is, King Rubin disappeared not long after his son Prince Lumbard left on a trade mission to Valizar. Then this Lord Gathla, with a large army of his loyal men showed up to challenge the king in single combat, for the rule of the land of Salidar. Sense the King or his son never showed up to accept the challenge, by the laws of the three wolf kingdoms, the lands were forfeit to the victor, on grounds of cowardice. Us loyal to the king were given the choice of joining or be banished, I had chosen to join, to find out what happened to our king, but even with all my efforts, I have failed to find out anything.”

 Kalieth listened to all Katreena had to say and then said “Your words are true Katreena, that much is certain to me, but your methods are bit odd.” She nodded and said “Being as I was high in the ranks, I had figured the new king would just let me keep it. But instead I was forced to travel with these vile scoundrels on border duties, waylaying strangers. Luckily they never found out I was a female.” Kalieth looked at her limping about and said “Are you able to travel?” Katreena looked at me and said “I would have been fine if your companion here, had not kick me in the crotch so hard. Not that I blame her after the other one that was with me tried to rape her, before she gutted him. We have mounts, not far from here, if the bastards that ran away, have not stolen them all.” Kalieth said “The prince must be made aware of this immediately.” I looked westward, towards Salidar, realizing that, for now, I would have to wait to see it. We then followed Katreena back to where their mounts had been tied. All of them were gone except for an orange bedraggled looking cat like mount.

 Kalieth looked at it and said “You still have old Jinga.” She patted her on the head and it purred and said “She’s the best Silvellion Lynx in the king’s army still. That’s why she’s the only mount here. They would not dare go near her for fear of her.” Kalieth laughed and said “More likely they though she would not bring a good price, even at the meat market.” It hissed at him, but Katreena soothed her and said “Don’t listen to him, Jinga, I know better.” petted her and then mounting her. I got up on Kalieth and Katreena looked at me and said “What happened to Sir Greggor, Kalieth and who is this tough little female that mounts you so boldly?” Kalieth looked at her sadly and said “Sir Greggor has fallen in battle to the scavengers, that you might have heard of. I too might have been dead, if I had not had the good fortune to be found by this warrior of the plains and been nursed back to health, by her. Katreena this is my new rider and my mate, Tasla.”

 Katreena looked at me with confusion and said “RIDER… and… MATE!? But she‘s so young.” I blushed and Kalieth smiled and said “She has earned my respect and trust, as both a healer and a warrior and has become my new rider. We have also joined in love, mated and she now bears my offspring, with the blessings of Cajah and is my mate for life and beyond death.” Katreena seemed not surprised by this, but laughed and said “You old dog, to take one so young, as a mate and rider. Mate I could see, but rider?” At first I felt a bit put out by her words, but Kalieth said “She is fierce and yet a kind and gentle healer. Her sole burns brightly with fierceness in battle and also with the flames of passion in love. These are both held in high regard by Cajah and me. I have never found a warrior that has even come close, including Sir Greggor or even you, my friend.”

 She looked down for a moment and then looked back up at me, with a tear flowing down her cheek and said “Well you should feel very proud to have the admiration of such a great and powerful warrior, as Kalieth.” and smiled and offered me her hand. I shook it and she looked at me strangely for a moment and then nodded and turned to Kalieth and said “Well my friend, I guess we must travel eastward, towards Valizar. Do you have any provisions? I only have enough food for me, for a few days.” Kalieth smiled wickedly and said “I could always eat your friends, but they would probably make me sick, from the filth, other than that we would have to go hunting.” Katreena shook her head and said “I forgot how unnerving your sense of humor could be Kalieth, but hunting would be no good around here. You would attract the wrong kind of attention and also find most of the game has been run off by our frequent patrols.”

 She thought for a moment and said “I know of a place where some of our king’s loyal men are holding up. I go there from time to time, when I can get away, to give them information.” She looked up at me and continued” They won’t like me bring you there…” then she looked at Kalieth and said “…but they might make an exception for you. We can then get provisions and anything else you might need there.” Kalieth nodded and said “Swiftly then, we are in great need of hast.” She then spurred her mount on and we were off like a light, heading southeastward. By evening we could see the tents of the camp and came upon their sentries. Katreena looked back and said “Let me approach and talk to them first.” and we held back and let her approach them. She talked a while and one of the guards run toward the camp. She then motioned us to approach and we all walked into the camp with her as an escort.

 I looked all around, at the soldiers watching us intently, as Katreena led us through the camp, to a large tent. They were all wearing the same red leather armor, with the golden wolf head, but they were watching us with a look, that made me feel nervous. I whispered into Kalieth’s ear “If our enemies and our allies are both wearing the same armor, how do we know which ones are which.” and he nodded his head ever so slightly and said “We cannot.” and looked at Katreena and narrowed his eyes. She brought us up to the tent, stopping by it and stood to one side. We looked at her suspiciously, as she turned and she smiled at us wickedly and said “Make yourself at home my friend… you’re going to be with us, for quite a while.” and pulled a rope, that pulled back both of the flaps of the tent. Inside I saw some kind of contraption and it then shot out a steel net at us, catching us by surprise and covering us completely. I was knocked off Kalieth and was pinned to the ground by its weight, as was he.

 Kalieth roared menacingly and said “You traitorous bitch!!” and tried to rise, but couldn’t, as Katreena just stood there confidently and laughed wickedly saying “You fool, you just let me walk you right in here and capture you. You have become weak Kalieth, but our new emperor will still enjoy having you around to play with.” Then a black wolf, in a black robe, with red markings, stepped up saying something in a magical tongue, moving his hands and lightning sprang from them. It hit the net and I screamed in pain, as I felt it burn right through me and then there was darkness. In the frightening darkness, I could hear Kalieth’s heartbeat and could feel him near me and tried to cry out to him, but he could not hear me and then he was gone and I was all alone again and I went unconscious.

 I came to, with a start, my eyes full of tears and felt, as if a dromo had ran over me. I discovered that I was tied to a post in the middle of a large tent. My hands were tied behind my back, around the post and my feet were tied in front of me. I could hear the guards laughing and talking about me, outside of the tent. I quickly began to working on the knot that was tying my dexterous little hands, with my nimble little fingers. They must have though me just another helpless little female, or they would have tied me up better, for the knot wasn’t that hard to undo at all. I soon had myself free, gathering up the rope into a coil and put it over my shoulders. I looked around the tent for something to use, as all my possessions were all gone and found a small throwing dagger, under a cot. I could see it was dark outside and smiled to myself, moving up to the back of tent and put my ear to it to listen. I heard nothing on the other side and began cutting a flap in the tent, just small enough for me to slip through.

 I got down in the dirt and lifted the flap ever so slightly and peered out. I saw nothing and then crawled out on my belly and pressed up against the side of the tent and looked around. Suddenly I saw a soldier, of average build, walking out a ways and saw him lift his armor and pee. I crept up on him silently, as I did hunting the senar and grabbed him by the muzzle and slit his throat, before he knew I was there. I then eased him to the ground and held him till he stopped moving. I dragged his body into the tall grass and I searched him, stripped him of what weapons and gear, that I could use. I found out that he was a young male raccoon. I hated having to kill him and found myself shedding tears for him, but I had to do it, to rescue Kalieth. His armor was too cumbersome for my way of fighting, but he did have a short sword, short bow and some arrows that were a bit different from mine, but I could still use them.

 I began hiding in the tall grass and moved around the camp silently looking for Kalieth. After a while of searching, I found him, in chains, inside a steel cage on a large cart that had some strange beast tied to it, similar to the ones the Prince’s carts were using. I thought to myself, with a fright “They must be going to take him to Salidar, I must stop them!” I moved around from shadow to shadow until I got close to him and found him unconscious and but still breathing. I reached over through the bars and touched his thick soft main and tears began flowing from my eyes. Then I saw someone coming towards the cart and ducked under it. I looked through the spokes of the wagon wheel and saw that it was the black wolf that has thrown the lightning at us earlier and he came up to the cart and looked at Kalieth saying “You’ll make a fine gift to the emperor. He will be very pleased.” and started moving towards the front of the cart.

 Then I saw a set of keys hanging on his belt and silently drew the short bow and fitted and arrow to it. I slipped out from under the cart, behind him and drew the bow slowly, and it made a creaking sound. The black wolf froze and said “You have done well to have gotten loose of your bonds so quickly and find him. He is to be the emperor’s prize and I won’t let you take him.” He slowly turned, looking deep into my eyes and said “For you now find yourself not wanting to free him, but wanting to surrender yourself to me instead.” and suddenly I found I could not move, as I looking in his bright yellow eyes. I tried to loose my arrow and kill him, but found I just could not do it. He then said “Now lower your bow and surrender yourself to me.” and I started to lower the bow, tears welling up in my eyes, as I tried hard to resist his words. My arms and hands began shaking from the tremendous effort of my resistance. I had by this time lowered the bow and was about to undraw it, when I heard Kalieth grown and say weakly “Tasla?”

 Suddenly my mind was clear of the black wolf’s words and I brought the bow up again and shot the black wolf right in the forehead. He fell back into the dirt and I then grabbed the keys, off of him. I was just about to unlock the doors, when an alarm went up in the camp, they had discovered my escape. I girt my teeth and growled in frustration and then saw the driver’s seat of the cart and thought to myself “How hard could it be?” I ran around and jumped into it, as soldiers began to come at me from every direction. I grabbed the reins and pulled on them and the beasts began backing up. I then got angry and said “Move you stupid animals.” and used the reins to slap them on the behind, with it. They leached forward and began running wildly, causing me to be thrown back in the seat hard. I saw we were coming up on a very stupid and surprised sentry, who tried to stop us, but was ran over by the beasts and I felt the bump, as the cart ran over him as well.

 Kalieth was regaining his senses and said “Guide them as you would guide me, but with the reins, pull the left one, to go left and the right one, to go right. Pull both of them back to stop, or to back up.” I then guided them off the road and towards the north, running through the tall grass. I then tied the reins off and climbed on the top of the cage, as it bounced around violently. I worked my way to the back, holding tightly onto the bars, as I moved. I then slid over the back of the cage and slid down the bars to the door lock. I tried the first key, but naturally, that wasn’t it, so I tried the other key. Suddenly we hit a big bump and the door flung open with me holding desperately onto it. I held onto the door for dear life and removed the key. I then worked my way along the cage door, as it swung to and fro and into the cage falling at Kalieth’s feet. He looked down at me, shaking his head, smiling at me in disbelief.

 I then unlocked his bonds with the other key and freed him of the chains. I looked at him and said” Are you well enough to get out of here?” He grinned and said “Being bounced around like this has made me quite awake, thank you. Get on and let’s get out of here.” I climbed on his back and held his thick furred main, locking my legs around his waist and he then jumped out, landing on his feet, as the cart sped on southward. We suddenly heard riders approach and dove to one side, down into the tall grass and laid low. The riders went rushing by, not noticing us and sped on after the cart. We then quietly moved away through the tall grass, feeling sore, tired and still very hungry, but we were alive and together again. We moved on for a long while side by side, every step an effort and then fell down in the grass and slept where we fell.

 I was awoke the next morning by a gentle hand on my shoulder and turned to see a soldier in red leather armor and a golden wolf’s head. With a start, I rolled over quickly, onto my back and come up on my elbows and then saw more of them surrounding me. I looked around in fear and saw Kalieth just standing there, talking to an old gray wolf in red metal armor. The soldier that woke me up, removed his helmet, a handsome and clean cut looking male badger and offered me his hand and I let him pull me up to my feet, still dazed a bit. He handed me some kind of meat pastry to eat and I grabbed it quickly and gobbled it down, not caring if it was poisoned or not, just to fill the empty space in my stomach. He looked at me and smiled understandingly, saying “Mind the fingers, my lady.” and I looked at him and then the other soldiers and noticed the proud and polished look of them all and realized these must be the real outcasts.

 I blushed and looked back at the male badger and said apologetically” I’m sorry, it’s just that, it’s been some time sense I ate anything last.” He smiled sympathetically and said “I heard as much from your companion. He sent me to wake you. Please come with me, my lady.” and he lead me over to Kalieth. He looked at me smiling, saying “Here’s my lovely mate and rider Tasla. Tasla this is Commander Foster, leader of the real king’s banished army. He took my hand and said “It such a pleasure to meet someone held in such high respect by Kalieth and his mate no less. Kalieth has been telling me all about your exploits and may I say I’m impressed, for one so young and beautiful.” and he kissed my hand, making me blush and look at Kalieth, but he only smiled with pride.

 I looked back at him and said “Thank you sir, I have been on my own, in the hot savanna wilderness, sense I was sixteen and have learned a few things out there about survival.” and took my hand from his. He nodded and said “Brave and modest, good qualities for a Hestari wolf rider. I can see why he chose you, as his new rider.” Then he turned back to Kalieth and said “Now back to business, Kalieth. If what you say is true, we have a new enemy race like nothing we have ever seen before. But we are powerless to do anything about it, for our King is missing and overthrown and the Prince is too far away to the east to help us.” Kalieth stomped his right forepaw and said “Then gather what troops and provisions you can and we will try to find the Prince and let him know what’s going on in Salidar. Hopefully we can bring him and his caravan back, in one piece, back across the plains. Then we can try to find the King and get your Kingdom back. Only then can we hope to stop this new menace before it’s too late.”

 Commander Foster rubbed his grizzled chin and said “Then rest a day or two and regain your strength and I will get you a new harness and some proper weapons and supplies for the journey.” Kalieth looked at him sternly and said “I will give you this day to get me what you can and will leave at dawn tomorrow. My mate and I need little, maybe a harness and saddlebags for me and some good weapons for her and some provisions.” Commander Foster then turned to me and said “What weapons and provisions do you need, my lady?” I thought a moment and said I have a short sword, fair bow and some arrows already. I could also use a light spear and maybe the use some bow and Fletcher’s tools for today. Also do you have a healer or shaman? All of my things were taken from me, when we were captured.”

 Commander Foster then called out “Can someone find Alabaster, we have need of his services and can someone get this charming girl some Fletcher’s tools and a light spear.” Even before he finished his statement, a tall white wolf in a silver robe with blue markings on it, steeped up to me, as soldiers ran about getting me what I needed. He was taller than most wolves, at least six feet tall, with deep penetrating blue eyes and spoke in a soft voice, saying “Hello Tasla, I have been waiting for you to find me. Nalakeesa Mavha has only recently spoken to me about you and now here you are.” I looked at him surprised, as the name he spoke was my old shaman’s secret name, known to only to his closest friends. I looked at him confused and said “How could he speak to you? You are here and he is still in my old village.

 He laughed and said “We shaman have our ways, needless to say he has told me that he has been watching you for a long time and knows, your destiny will soon be at hand. He also knew you were heading my way and wanted me to give you some of your things you may have misplaced.” he handed me a small back pack and some familiar looking weapons, then said “On your way back, he suggests you return to your village and see him. It is time, he said, that all in the village see what you have become.” I looked inside the pack and found all my possessions, just as I left them and to my astonishment the weapons, that he gave me, were **mine!** I went to look up at him and thank him, but he was gone. I looked all around, but he was nowhere to be found and the commander was still calling for him, as if he was never here.

 Inside my pack I also found some additional scrolls and other alchemical powders that I had never seen before. I also found an amulet with a silver full moon and seven stars, with bright white gems, surrounding it on a silver chain. I could swear, that I could see a wolf’s head inside the moon, looking at me and smiling. It seemed to shimmer and glow brightly, as Kalieth came towards me and then went out, as he approached and said “I see you have somehow found your things, but how could that be and where did you get a moon amulet?” I looked at him and said “Did you not see a tall white wolf talk to me and giving me these things?” He shook his head and said “I saw no one by you for some time, but I have been talking to the commander, on and off, about many things and may have missed him.” I still looked around for the white wolf for some time, but never seen him again.

 I placed the amulet around my neck and closed my eyes, as I felt a warm glow envelop my body. I opened my eyes and felt the weariness lifted from me, then Kalieth suddenly exclaimed “Tasla, the wound on your back has completely healed! The blessing of the Moon Mother is upon you, my love.” Then I hugged him and a warm glow enveloped us both and he too felt great, as his wounds were healed, as well. Somehow everyone else seemed oblivious to the glow, but we both basked in it, holding onto each other. Kalieth looked at me lovingly and said “I feel great now, let us eat and make ready for tomorrow.” We then got something to eat and Kalieth had himself fitted for a new harness and saddle bags that would be ready by morning.

 Meanwhile, I worked on my weapons to get them ready, oiling and sharpening my blade and spear, waxing my bow string and bow to make it more quiet when drawing it and reworking the arrows that I had with me and made a few more. I spent the rest of the afternoon reading the scrolls Alabaster had given me. They had recipes for some new elixirs for healing salves and potions, various poison antidotes, a sleeping potion that could be applied to a weapon, or used in a drink, and various other useful elixirs, potions, pastes, and powders. Most of the ingredients were in my pack, but I will have to find some of the more rare ones. Kalieth and I were then given a tent for the night and we loved each other for a while and then we fell asleep snuggling into each other‘s soft warm loving bodies.

Chapter 5 - Our Return Eastward

Revised 04/25/2015

 We awoke early and made ready for the trek eastward to find the Prince. The leather worker made last minute adjustments to Kalieth’s new harness, as per his request and soon he stood there ready for us to go. His new harness was complete with a hard leather breasts plate and two saddle bags, with rations and other supplies. I tied down my things, along with two water skins and was presented with a package by the leather workers from Kalieth. Inside were leather clothing similar to what I was use to wearing, but new and not frayed, torn or piecemealed together. I thanked them and put the package in my pack to put on later, hugging Kalieth and saying “Thanks Kalieth, I guess my old clothes were getting a bit worn.” I then mounted Kalieth and said good bye to Commander Foster and his soldiers and we began heading eastward.

 Just as we topped a hill, I looked back and saw the Alabaster in the distance, watching us as we departed and he nodded and raised he hand in parting. I nodded my head and waved my hand in parting, as well, hoping we would meet again someday and I heard a soft voice in my head say “We will, child of the moon, fair thee well, till next we meet.” I smiled and then turned and said “Let’s ride like the wind, Kalieth.” He howled with renewed spirit and said “As you wish, my love.” and we once more sped through the tall savanna grass, as one. Our sprit flue high together, once more, as I felt Kalieth’s strong muscular body moving quickly beneath me. I laid low on him holding his harness grip, my legs holding onto him tightly and could smell the exhilarating scent of his body. At no time in my life have I ever felt so contented, as when we moved swiftly across the plains, like this, together.

 By mid-day we slowed and I dismounted and walked beside him, giving him some water and something to eat. He looked over at me and smiled and said “I cherish our time together alone, Tasla, far away from the troubles of the world. You give me a peace of mind that I have never had before, in my life.” I looked straight ahead felling sad and said “But soon it will end, when we find the Prince and we shall be thrust right back deep into the worlds troubles again, that’s something we just can’t escape.” He looked ahead as well and said “That much is true, but even if I had not crossed your path, it still would have found you, there in your peaceful quiet existence and would have swept you up into it still.” I smiled and looked over at him, as he looked over at me and said “Then I thank the stars and the moon for bring us together Kalieth. At least our love and strength together, gives me some hope for our future.”

 Kalieth stopped and looked deep into my eyes and said “As do I, my love. I have grown stronger, just for having known you, my love and I will never be the same inside.” We walked on quietly, side by side, listening to the wind blowing through a knurled old tree nearby. We stopped there for some shade and for Kalieth to rest a bit and we ate. I looked up at the gathering clouds and realized it would soon be raining and looked over at him and said “I think we will run into several rain squalls.” He looked up and sniffed the air and said “Yes, I can smell it, but we must push on never the less and we will be safe for a time, as only fools venture out in such weather” and he smiled broadly and crossed his eyes. I laughed and he tackled me, as the rain started coming down and soon we were rolling in the wet grass soaked to the bone, loving each other.

 Then I laid there beneath him as the rain flowed down his strong muscular thick furred body onto mine and we looked at each other and sighed together, knowing we must push on. He climbed off of me and I quietly mounted him and we were then off like the wind that blew at us. The rain fell hard on us and slowed us down to a walk for a while and still we drove on, both of us knowing the urgency of our mission, until the rain finally stopped. But by then we were soaked and miserable, the cold night breeze gave us a chill, as night fell and the clouds dissipated. We walked for a while longer, under the bright clear stars and our sprit rose, as we saw the light of the moon. We then laid, under it, on the cold wet grass huddling close for warmth and his warm body heat envelop me quickly and soon I fell asleep, holding him lovingly.

 The next morning I awoke early, as the sky began to lighten with the suns rising and heard the sounds of herd animals close to us. I grabbed my bow feeling the need for fresh meat and looked at Kalieth still sleeping and smiled thinking to myself “He could do with a little fresh meat too, I’ll wager.” and went hunting. There was a herd of senar not far from us and we were downwind from them. That was probably what awoke me, as their scent wafted under my hungry nose. I stalked them for a while, as the sky grew brighter with dawns coming. I chose my prey and drew my bow quietly and loosed my arrow. It struck the senar’s chest and the creature ran and I was quickly after it, feeling like old times when I was by myself. I tracked it quickly through the tall grass and soon came upon its lifeless body. I knelt by it and closed my eye, offering thanks to its soul.

 I then lifted it up over my shoulders and carried it back to where Kalieth still laid sleeping. I skinned the senar female and then cut it up into small chunks, for us to eat now. Kalieth stirred, his nose twitch and his eyes opened wide and he sat up in surprise and said “Bless my tired and hungry bones, is that real meat I smell.” I simply nodded and smiled, continuing to prepare some of the meat for us to carry. He got up and came over and I laid a large piece down for him to eat and he ate it hungrily. I ate a few of the chunks, relishing it almost forgotten flavor, as he looked up and said “If I would have had to have eaten another piece of those ration, I would have heaved. Thank you my love.” I smiled and munched on another small chunk of raw meat, watching him happily enjoying his breakfast.

 Suddenly I felt sick and got up quickly and threw up in the tall grass. Kalieth came to me, concerned and said “What is it my love?” I held my stomach, trying to hold back another and said “I think… our child is trying… to let me know… it is in… THERE!” and I threw up again. I stood there a while, rubbing my stomach, until it settled down and then grabbed the water skin off of Kalieth’s harness and drank some water. I began to feel better, as the nausea passed and sat down and tried some more meat. This time it managed to stay down and I ate some more. Kalieth sat down by me, still concerned and said “Will you be alright to travel?” I smiled and said “I’m fine, it will only happens sometimes in the morning, so the females of my clan have said, during the first couple of months, while I’m pregnant.” He leaned over and nuzzled my belly, making me giggle and said “Then it is true, you’re going to have my child, Cajha be praised.” I nodded and said “Seem that it is so, my love. So we better hurry up and save the world, so we can give it the attention it needs.” and hugged his big furry head, as he continued to nuzzle my belly.

 We then finished eating and I packed up our things on Kalieth, along with the fresh meat. The day was now clear, when I mounted Kalieth and soon we were off across the hot savanna. We stopped only a few timed just long enough to eat and drink some water and by evening we saw our rock far in the distance and our hearts leap with joy. We tore across the distance and reached it by night fall and found it abandoned just like we left it. I dismounted Kalieth and hugged him, saying “We’re home, even if it’s just for a night. I have missed this old rock.” He looked up at it and nodded, saying “Before I met you, I never had a home, being always on the move from town to town. Now I am home, with you by my side and that feels good.” We sat and ate some of the meat and drank some of the last of the water.

 I looked at the empty skins and said “I need to fill these at the pools, there should be some water there after the rains fell. Kalieth looked at me concerned and said “Maybe I should go with you.” I smiled and said “You have been going hard all day, rest and I will be back quickly.” I then went to the pools and leaned over to fill our water skins. While on my knees filling them, I heard something moving up behind me and thought Kalieth had followed me, when it grabbed me from behind, clamping its hand over my short muzzle. I struggled, but it was strong and I heard it say in a hissing voice “You’ll bring a find pricccce at the sssslave markets in Valizzzzar.” and it poked me with something sharp, in my side. I began to feel weak and tried to cry out, but no sound came out and soon could not move and my vision blurred. It then gagged me and tied my hands, behind my back and picked me up.

 It carried me to its slitherling and I realized it was a lone Scavenger, as there was no others around. I tried and tried to move, but the effects of the poison had made me unable to move a finger. Tears flowed down my cheeks, as he tied me to its back and I realized it was about to take me away from Kalieth. It mounted its slitherling and rode off at a quick pace and I watch my rock slowly shrink into the distance. I cried out to Kalieth with my whole heart, but to no avail and all I could do was cry. It drove on all night, bouncing me around on the slitherling’s rump and I fell into a fitful sleep. When I awoke the light was blinding and it was hot. I held my eyes closed for a while until they got use to the light and opened them slowly. I was still bound and gagged laying on my back on the dusty ground and I could see the Scavenger its helmet now removed, sitting and eating something.

 It notice my eyes open and turned it scaly head to me said “You are finally awake, dog. How did you like a tasssste of fire mosssss poisssson, make you quite doccccile, yessss.” I found that I could now move and tried to free myself, but found I was in chains now, my neck, hands, waist, and feet had steel shackles with steel chains connecting then. It laughed and said “Don’t try to esccccape, you are quite locked up tightly, my pet.” It was then, as my head started to clear, that I could discern a slight feminine accent to its voice and realized it was a female. I looked around and saw there was no one else around and sat up on my haunches. It looked around and then back at me and smiled it cold toothy smile and said “There issss no one but ussss, my pet. I am alone, out here in thissss dry accurssssed land of yourssss, unable to go home, unable to leave thissss place, for fear of death, from you furred ones. My only refuge, that greedy and unholy ccccity of Valizzzzar, forcccced to ssssell the likessss of you to the filthy sssslaverssss there, to ssssurvive.”

 It got up and threw whatever it was it was eating away and looked out on the savanna a look of anger on its face. I suddenly realized she was a loner like I use to be and thought to myself “But why? Kalieth had said they stayed in large grouped and was never seen out here solitary, so why was she out here all on her own.” I suddenly thought of how I felt before I met Kalieth and felt the tears will up in my eyes once more, as I felt a terrible longing for him. She turned and noticed my tears and said “You have ssssomething in your eye? Why you furriessss alwayssss sssshedding the tearssss?” and came over to me and looked into my eyes. That’s when I looked deep into her golden yellow eyes, they were beautiful in a strange way, so alien and yet so familiar at the same time. She gently turned my head side to side and said “Your eyessss look fine, clear and very nicccce, you will bring a good pricccce.”

 She then removed the gag and gave me some water. I drank it down thankfully and then pleaded “Please let me go back to my mate.” She pushed me down on my back and looked menacingly at me, bearing her sharp teeth and said “Let me go back to mine and my children! They are all lost to me forever, all because of a power hungry furred sorcerer of yours. ” I looked at her quizzically and said “Sorcerer? Who?” She got up off of me and sat down tiredly by me, saying “He issss only known to ussss, assss the Emperor Dracar and lives in the sssswampssss far ssssouth from here. We were ssssummoned by a powerful sssspell of hissss and taken by forcccce from our world and I wassss sssseparated from my family, when I wassss ssssummoned, but now I sssseparated forever, a sssslave to hissss will. However ssssome like me have freed oursssselves of him, but we have nowhere to go, hunted by both our own kind and by yourssss.”

 She stood up, suddenly and looking across the plains and drew her sword. Then just as equally sudden Kalieth burst through tall grass and hit her, knocking her to the ground, her sword flying away from her and pinning her there. He looked at her bearing his large teeth in her face and said menacingly “Where is my mate, lizards?!!!” Her eyes went wide with fright and I knew he would soon strike at her and cried out “KALIETH… NO, PLEASE STOP!!!” He turned his head and said “Tasla?” I looked at him imploringly and said “Please Kalieth don’t kill her, we need her.” He looked at me, as if I lost my mind and said “Tasla are you crazy, this is a scavenger, has she bewitched you?” I looked deep into his eyes and said “Please Kalieth, let her up and listen to what she has to say.” He eased back slowly, watching her intently and she sat up, looking at me quizzically and then at him, as he said “No tricks lizard, or I will rip out your throat. Now free her and then we will talk.”

 She got up slowly, keeping her hands in plain sight and grabbed a ring of keys on her belt. She then walked over to me and unlocked my chains, looking at me strangely and said “That’ssss your mate? You furred one are more sssstrange then I had initially thought. I removed the chains and Kalieth said “Now Tasla, put them on her.” I hesitated and he said more forcefully “Do what I say, Tasla!” My ears went back, like they did when he disciplined me, that day with the Dromo and I looked apologetically at her and did as he said. I knew why he made me do it and he was probably right in doing it, but I hated locking the chains closed and said “Sorry.” She looked at me sadly and said “He is right, I wouldn’t trusssst me ether, after what they did to him, his rider and the resssst. I ssssaw them both fall and hated being apart of it, assss the others mindlesssssly did our masssster’ssss bidding. I found mysssself free of the sssspell, not long afterwardssss and later broke off from them.”

 Kalieth came up looking over the chains and nodded, saying “So you can speak our language, sort of, lizard.” She looked at him and said “My name is Mazzzzea, great warrior mount Kalieth, not lizzzzard. A lizard craws on its belly and I stand proudly on my own two feet.” He looked at her, shaking with anger and said “I would rip you to pieces for what your people did to us that day, but my obstinate mate seems to think you are valuable to our cause, so speak before I change my mind.” She proceeded to tell him what she had already told me and then I said “Kalieth, Katreena also said something about an Emperor at the enemy camp and then the black wolf mentioned him again, when he was at the wagon, about to take you to him. He might also have had something to do with what is going on in Salidar.” She looked at me and said “Ssssalidar issss but the firsssst sssstep in the emperor’ssss planssss for the three wolf kingdomssss, he hassss sssspirited away their king with hissss ssssorcery and laid claim to hissss landssss.”

 Kalieth looked at me alarmed and said “We have to find the Prince and let him know what’s going on. Come Tasla, grab your things, we must leave at once.” and he made ready to go. I gathered my weapons, water skins and pack and looked back at Mazea, saying “But what about Mazea?” He looked at her angrily and said “Let her rot like they left me.” I threw my things down angrily and unlocked the chains on Mazea and said to him “As I took pity on you, I now take pity on her, remember my big ally.” Suddenly my words struck home and he understood their meaning and lowered his head in defeat, turning around to face me. Mazea shook off her chains and looked at us both a long time, as if deciding something. She looked at me in amazement and said “You are the firsssst friendly facccce, I have sssseen in thissss god forssssaken placccce.” and then turned to Kalieth and bowed and said “I am yourssss to command, great warrior Kalieth, do with me assss you will.” and then closed her eyes and lifted her head, exposing her neck to him.

 Kalieth looked at her long and she stood there like that and waited for his decision. He gruffly said “We shall see if my mate’s faith in you is justified. Gather your things and follow. Come Tasla.” and I grabbed my things and packed them on his harness and then mounted him. Mazea gathered her sword, but left her helmet and mounted her slitherling and followed, as Kalieth sped off eastward toward Valizar. Her slitherling managed to keep up with us, as we sped on, but I soon realized that Kalieth was holding back for her, despite his urgency. As evening came, we had come close to my old clan’s village and I leaned forward and said “We can stop at my village for the night and rest.” Kalieth said “Will they let you in after you disobeyed them and what of your new friend there.” and he motioned to Mazea.

 I stroked he big head and said “You have forgiven your obstinate mate, her disobedience, why can’t they and besides they will be amazed by her. Beside the shaman wants to see what I have become and he has got a lot of pull with his clan.” He half looked at me and said “As far as the disobedience, my mate, we will talk later.” and I realized I was in for it. By sunset we came up on my village and the ones outside ran back to for safety, as the warriors met us, brandishing their weapons. Then the leader, named Hammond approached and then looked at me in surprise and said “Tasla, is that you?” I raised my hand in a sign of peace and said “Yes, Hammond, it’s me after nearly three seasons alone on the wild savanna plains, I have returned to see the clan’s shaman. He nodded and said “The shaman has told us of your coming, although I didn’t believe him, until now. Come and I will take you to him, but your friends must wait here.”

 I could see some of the males, eyeing me, as I walked by them, but did not look their way. I knew I was not exactly wearing the traditional female clothing and had filled out quite a bit in the past two full seasons. Others of the clan seemed very impressed to even be seeing me again, after not hearing from me in that same two seasons, and I could hear them talking among themselves about me. This made me well up with pride, having showed them they were wrong about me. I finally made it to the shaman’s hut and he was outside, waiting for me, with arms open wide and smiling proudly at me. I ran up to him and hugged him and he said” It so good to see you at last, my young friend.” and he took me inside. I looked at my old mentor and said “It is good to see you too, Nalakeesa Mavha.” He smiled at me and looked me up and down, saying “I must see if my visions are true and must examine you now, Tasla.” I nodded and said “I understand.”

 He then placed a hand on my belly, and I felt a tingling inside of me, as he breathed some mystical words and he then said “Already his seed is growing inside of you, with the blessings of Cajah, the Moon Mother. Now let’s have a look at you.” He then lifted my top and examined my soft furred breasts with a gentle touch of his hands, making me blush a bit, as his fingers ran over my sensitive nipples. He then lowered my top back over them and smiled at me and said “You have grown much, in beauty, Tasla ” He then lead me to his table and he then lifted me up onto it, laying me back, saying “Now spread your thighs, for me.” As I did so, he then knelt down between my legs, lifting my loin cloth, to examine the moist lips of my sex, with his nimble fingers. I could feel his hot breath on them, as he looked closely at them, making me moan softly and start to pant. He then nodded and lowered my loin cloth and said “Now turn over.” I did as he ask and he lifted my tail and spread my cheeks examining my tight little anus, as I laid there blushing again and biting me lip.

 When he was finished, he said “All seems well with your pregnancy, Tasla and you are in fine health, for being out on your own so long. “ I then turn over and sat up, wetting his table with my moist sex, still panting and blushing, but he didn’t seem to notice. He then handed me a scrolls and said “Now this potion will help alleviate your morning sickness and the hot flashes, that I’m sure you’re already experiencing.” I took it gratefully and said panting “Yes, and I sure could use some of this right now, as a matter of fact.” and he handed me a bottle and smiled broadly and said “Most do after my examination of them, but I‘m a honorable shaman and would never take advantage of it.” and I quickly drank it down. The warmth between my legs quickly subsided and I began to breath normally again. He then helped me down, off his table and we sat by his fire and talked of old times. He then wanted to know about my adventures with Kalieth and the female scavenger we had found and somehow befriended.

 I told him everything and held nothing back, even about what was going on at Salidar. He then seemed troubled and said “I have been feeling a great imbalance in things, as of late and had wondered what the cause of it all was, but now I understand. This sorcerer, has somehow opened a portal into their world, enslave them with his magic and brought them here to do his evil bidding. You need to find the Prince quickly and let him know what has transpired in Salidar. You will need his aid, if you are to travel the road you have chosen.” I looked down, feeling overwhelmed by his words and said “But what can I do about this, I’m only a young female wild dog?” He smiled and said “Already, you have felt the magic of the moon and have grown strong in it. Cajah is watching over you and you are changing, as we speak, I can feel this. You and Kalieth are becoming one, thru her magic and blessings.” I was shocked by his words and said “You mean I am become like Kalieth?”

 He laughed and said “No, you will become something special, unlike anything seen on this world. You will become that which you were meant to be, YOU and that is good.” He laughed and held a mirror up and I saw my reflection in it. I had only seen myself a few times in that mirror, when I was young, but now I looked stronger and yet more beautiful. I wasn’t that little female wild dog anymore, I was growing up. Then I noticed my fur was becoming thicker and more lustrous and my eye were more wilder and wolf like and shown with an inner fire and I looked away, frightened and said “It true, I’m becoming a wolf.” and began to cry. He came to me and held me saying “No, you are changing into a warrior, the fire you see, is your own inner strength. However, your union with Kalieth has and will continue to alter you further, but that I cannot foresee. Only the Moon Mother will know for sure, because as your love for him grows, so does the change and that can only be good. For only good can come from true love.”

 He words comforted me, but I still couldn’t help but feel a little bit apprehensive about my future. I looked up at him and said “But I still feel frightened, Nalakeesa Mavha. Alabaster had called me child of the moon. I didn’t know then, but he was telling my future, but I still don’t know what it means. Help me understand, my old mentor.” and I held him tightly. He stood up and said “Hand me the medallion that Alabaster gave you.” and I reached up and removed the amulet from my neck and handed it to him. He examined it for some time and said “I don’t know where Alabaster found this, but it seems to have the moon mothers very own touch upon it. I can feel her presents on it strongly, keep it safe. He would not have given this to just anyone so lightly, as a mere gift.”

 He handed it back to me and I placed it around my neck and closed my eyes, as I felt the warmth emanate from it. I sat back down and looked back up at him and said “But why would the moon mother, Cajah, take any interest in me at all, I am no wolf, I’m just a wild dog.” He looked at me angrily and said “We are a just as worthy, as any wolf and in her wisdom she knows this. I am proud to be a wild dog and so should you be, Tasla.” I looked down and said “I’m sorry, I… I did not mean it that way. It’s just that I… do not feel worthy of any of this.” He looked at me long and said “Kalieth has felt you worthy, enough to give you his gift and his love. It is because of how strongly he feels about you, that you have been chosen by the moon mother. There is also something else that I have not told you before.” He got up and turned away, lowering his head and said “You were not born of this clan, you were found in the tall grass, after a terrible wind storm the night before, by your mother, while she was gathering straw. Who you were or where you had come from, we did not know, but I took this as a sigh and we raised you among us as one of our own.”

 He turned and smiled at me and continued “But it soon became clear to me, that you were very special, as you were not like the other females and became strong minded. I then decided to teach you my magic and alchemy and you were eager to learn. Unfortunately I could not change your mind, when you decided to leave.” I looked down into the flames and felt shaken, by his words, unsure now more than ever about who I was. But then there was a great commotion outside and I heard Kalieth’s roar and realized I had been in here to long a time and he must have gotten impatient. We both ran outside, as many warriors were trying to stop Kalieth as he rushed into the middle of the village. He threw them all around like toys and then saw me and came towards me dragging several more with him.

 I rushed to his side and he calmed down and he said “Oh Tasla, I had feared that something had happened to you. You have been gone so long and they would not let us in.”, as all the warriors surrounded us both, brandishing their weapons. Nalakeesa Mavha raised his hand and they then lowered their weapons. Then Mazea spoke from behind the Shaman and he turned to her and she said “Your warriors are in need of training, shaman, if they’re going to defend themselves and this village from my people. I could have killed you and your leaders, as they fretted over him. Nalakeesa Mavha smiled and said “I knew you were there, Mazea and uncovered a pistol type crossbow from his robes and said “You would have found its bolt very unpleasant.” and she bowed to him and he lowered it, smiling. She looked at him and said “How do you know my name?” He motioned toward me and said “Tasla has told me of you and your people’s plight and I will help them if I can.” She bowed again and said “Then I am your humble servant.”

 I turned back to Kalieth and said “I did not mean to worry you my love, but I needed to know some things that only he could tell me.” Kalieth looked at Nalakeesa and said “Then why can he not tell us both, as what concerns you, concerns us both, does it not?” Nalakeesa nodded and said “You are of course right.” He then turned to Mazea and said “This also concerns you, as well.”, and he invited us all inside. We all sat by the fire and he began “You all are now involved in something that could destroy our world. This mad sorcerer, in his thirst for revenge, is upsetting the natural balance of our world. If he is not stopped our world will be no more.” He turn to Mazea and said “This gate he has opened to your world Mazea, is the cause of this imbalance and must be sealed closed. Your people must return to your world before it is closed, or your people will be stranded here forever.”

 He turned to Kalieth and said “You must fine Prince Lumbard and tell him what has happened to his father. He must rescue his father, reclaim his lands and warn the other wolf kingdoms what is happening.” Kalieth looked at him wryly and said “I know this old dog, what more can you tell us, that we don’t know?” I elbowed Kalieth in the side and he exclaimed “Whaaa….!” Nalakeesa smiled and said “What you don’t know is… the king never left the castle. He is being held prisoner inside a magic amulet, worn by the usurper King Gathla. With the help of the king’s loyal men, the prince should be able to gain access to the castle and capture the usurper.” He then looked deep into Kalieth’s eyes and said “Above all you must protect Tasla, she is changing, becoming what she was always meant to be, by the blessings of Cajha. In flame inside her is about to ignite and become powerful.”

Kalieth looked at me and I hugged him for comfort, still feeling a bit afraid of what was happening to me. He turned to Nalakeesa and said “You still speak in riddles, old dog and are frightening Tasla with your strange notions. So speak clearly or we will leave right now. ”, and he growled. Nalakeesa held up his hand and said “I’m not certain of course, but I believe she is becoming Cajha’s avatar. All signs point to this fact. What is happening in this world has affected Cajha and she had sent Tasla here to stop it.” Kalieth looked unconvinced and said “This sorcery only started only a short time ago and Tasla was born eighteen years ago, old dog.” Nalakeesa looked sternly at Kalieth and said “What is time to a God? Tasla was sent ahead, so she would be ready to become what she is destined to become. She was meant to find you and become your mate. She was meant to become part of your life and to save this world.”

Suddenly, I screamed holding my ears, jumping up and running out of Nalakeesa’s hut and kept running as fast as I could, until I was far away from the village. Kalieth finally caught up with me, as I stood there panting hard. I ran to him and clutched him tightly, burying my face in his thick chest fur saying “Kalieth, I’m so afraid of what is happening to me.” He put a paw on my shoulder and held me, saying “Be comforted, if what is happening is the will of Cajah, then it can only be good.” I looked up at him and said “But to hear that my whole life has been mapped out for me, before I was even born, is just too much to take.” Mazea then road up and jumped off, saying “Don’t lissssten to that old dogsss, he crazzzy. But he right about finding your princccce. We may need many to sssstop ssssorcerer.”Kalieth nuzzled me and said “She’s right let’s go now and worry about destiny later.” I wiped my eyes and nodded climbing on him and we were off like a light.

We rode most of the day in silence, as I tried to make sense of it all. By night fall we had traveled half of the distance and made camp for the night. Kalieth was still untrusting about Mazes and kept a wary eye on her. She did likewise and then I broke the silence saying “You two need to lighten up, if we are to travel together, I for one trust you both with my life.” Mazea looked at me strangely and said “What makesss you ssso cccertain about me? I took you prissssoner and was going to ssssell you to the sssslave traider.” I smiled and said “I don’t know, I just do. You seem an honorable person to me and thus far have been true to your word. You have had many chances to escape us and I’m sure Kalieth wishes you would be gone.” Kalieth laughed wickedly and said “I wish she would, so I could hunt her down.” I looked at him in anger and said “Kalieth stop!!” It was then that he looked at me stunned and I got up sat by Mazea, looking at him angrily and said “If I thought like you do, you would be dry bones in the sand right now. I took a chance with you, why can’t you give her a chance to prove herself.”Kalieth looked at me angrily and said “Tesla I have had about enough of your insolence in this matter!”

Mazea stood up and looked at us both and said “Sssstop, both of you. Lissssten to yoursssselvessss and don’t let me comesss between you. I have been away from my mate for many monthssss and wish I could hold him and apoligizzzze much for heated words we ssspoke in anger. When she was in chainsss, she begsss me to let her go back to you, with so much feelingsss for you that I would have let her go anyway, if you had not arrived. Don’t fight over me, I would rather diesss right now, then comesss between your love for each other. Killsss me now and have done with it. For my lonelinessss hurtssss me. ”, and she closed her eyes and lifted her head, exposing her throat to Kalieth. Kalieth looked at her and then at me, standing up and walking up to her. I thought for a moment he was going to do it, as his body tensed, but he just sighed, lowering his head and bowed, saying “Forgive me dear lady.”, and Mazea lowered her head and stared at him in disbelief.

He then walked over to me and looked deep into my eyes and said “Please forgive me too, Tesla. I should learn to trust you more in these matters of heart. Cajha has chosen wisely. You could very well mend the world’s wounds, all of them.” He then turned to Mazea and said “Welcome, warrior. I will trust in you if you will but trust in me, Mazea.” Mazea looked at me and said “You givesss me hope that one day I goesss home to my mate.”, and then she turned back to Kalieth and once more offered her throat saying “I now offersss myself to you warrior, as a ssssign of trusssst and will followsss you willingly into battle and defendsss both of you withsss my very life.” I stood up and said wryly “Does this mean I can finally get soon sleep.” They both looked at me for a long moment and then we all burst out in laughter. Kalieth came over and sat by me and said “I love you Tesla, even if you are a bit obstinate and crazy.” Mazea sat down by us and said “I glad, I meet usessss. I thoughtsss I never ssseess a friendly facesss ever again. Thanksss you Tassela for believingsss in me.”

We then bedded down for the night and slept peacefully till the morning sun warmed our faces. We got up and ate from our provisions and I could feel that the tension between Kalieth and Mazea was completely gone. I tried everything down tight and then mounted Kalieth, as Masea mounted her slitherling. I looked at her and asked “What do you call it?” It bucked a little and she said “I willsss call it lunch if it don’t behave.”, and Kalith roared with laughter, as we started off.

**Index of terms:**

**Cajha** - One of many goddesses of the known civilized races, mostly worshiped by the two main wolf races and the patron goddess of the three wolf kingdoms. Her domain is the moon, her gifts are fierceness in battle and the passiions of love, both of which burn in the hearts of all wolves. She is also referred to and revered as, the Moon Mother, the legendary mother of all wolves, said to be a great white furred she-wolf.

**Dromo** - A thick white furred, hoofed plains mammal with very dangerous horns. It is a cross somewhere between an earth buffalo and a cow, with thick white fur all over its body that protects it from the harsh savanna sun.

**Hestari war wolf** - A large intelligent four footed wolf of the woodlands of Hestari, they are used mostly as battle mounts by various races. A fierce, loyal and intelligent mount, they are sought out by many strong and brave warriors, but only a few ever earn the privilege of their trust and loyalty. It is said that they are so fierce in battle that even poisons will not bring them down. They are also masters of the blood fury, a kind of controlled berserker rage, in which it seemingly become a mindless raging beast. It will kill everything in its path with savage brutal attacks, **except** those it considers friends and allies. It will often go into a blood fury rage, if its rider is in peril, to protect them.

**Silvellion Lynx** - A large feline mount used by the armies of the three wolf kingdoms. Resembling a large earth lynx, standing about five feet tall at the shoulder, seven feet from snout to bobbed tail. They are of above average animal intelligence and but cannot speak or reason like the Hestari war wolves. However they are a quick agile mount, with sharp claws and fangs and are fearless in battle. Riders and mounts are trained together at a young age to facilitate a bond between each other.

**Senar** - a little brown furry hoofed plains mammal, similar to the Ibex of earth, but with light tan colored stripes like a zebra, to hide it in the tall yellow grass of the plains where it lives.

**The Savanna Plains of Narda** - A large hot dry savanna plain, consisting mainly of hardy tall yellow grass, with sparse trees few and far between, and small shallow pockets of water that collect in various areas from the occasional rain squalls. Only a few clans and tribes of plain folk, along with the occasional scavengers, thieves and outlaws dare to live in this inhospitable land. The land is also the habitat of various mammals, birds, and lizards, which the plains folk depend on.

**Junamint** - An alchemical paste used as a local numbing agent for wounds, made from the berries of the Juna plant, a flowering plant found by pools of water on the savanna plains. It is mainly used by healers and shaman of the plains folk.

**Packda** - A large gray furred ox-like animal that is used as a pack animals and for pulling large carts. Faster than an earth ox they can reach a maximum speed of 32 miles per hour, at full speed, pulling a cart. They are the toughest, most resilient, hardy and most chosen of all beasts of burden, able to withstand long trips and the many hardships, during them.

**Powered senar bone** - An alchemical powder used to test water for poisons or impurities, made from the bleached bone of a Senar. It is mainly used by shaman of the plains folk.

**Slitherling** - A very dangerous, six foot tall, bipedal black lizard of the southern plains of Narda, with small arms and really sharp teeth in its long tapered mouth. They can be used sometimes as mounts, if someone is brave or foolhardy enough to try to train them, a very dangerous profession.