

Chapter 12 - Dayna

Dayna leaned on her elbows, peering closely at the map spread on the desk before her. A black dot marked the city of Drasich, home to the university. To the west, more black dots marked the other free cities, while to the west a series of cone-like shapes indicated the Shrouded Mountains. The mountain range ran hundreds of leagues to the west until they split into a myriad of smaller ranges and hills that were swallowed up by the forests of the eastern reaches. Weighing down one edge of the map was a long dagger while the other was pressed to the desk by the weight of the small horse statue that Habernalle had given her. The finely wrought statue was wobbling slightly - not due to any magic, but because the desk it was placed upon was rocking to a steady rhythm. The elven mage picked up the statue and slid a book over to keep the map unfurled before casting a frustrated glance over her shoulder at her familiar, Gomp.

The diminutive imp was standing tip-toed on Dayna's chair. His disproportionately large phallus was currently crammed inside the elf's pussy and his heavy balls swung back and forth, occasionally slapping against her mons, as he enthusiastically fucked his master. "Not so rough back there, asshole. I'm trying to get some work done," remarked Dayna acerbically.

"Sorry boss!" said Gomp quickly. The normally impertinent wee demon did not want to jeopardize the new relationship he had with his master and had discovered a hitherto unknown reservoir of politeness. Until yesterday, the small creature had had to barter for any opportunity for a little sexual release. Yesterday, however, she had called him over after returning from the library and had spent a pleasure filled hour humping her sweet elven cunt up and down his cock while she squeezed beholder eggs out of her anus. She didn't even mind when he'd pumped his seed into her after she'd expelled the librarian's anal deposit. Just that morning, Dayna had made him suck on her clit while she showered and was now letting him take his pleasure in her quim while she studied at her desk. Gomp looked upwards and said silent thanks to Habernalle for opening up this new side of his once demure master before grabbing two handfuls of her smooth, round ass and getting back to work.

Dayna herself was a little astonished at her newfound appetite for sex, although she understood well the origin. The spell Habernalle had woven into her had left her with a constant yearning for cock whenever one was nearby. The overwhelming lust had left her almost useless, but her friend Trelisopoles, the beholder librarian of the university, had eased the burden through a spell of his own. Now, the desire for a proper fucking was still strong, but it had been pushed into the background of her mind and was entirely manageable. More than manageable, in fact; the elf had found her mental alacrity enhanced while she was being serviced. So, here she was, bent over her desk with Gomp vigorously mating her cunny while she planned out the next step in her mission to retrieve the Omnigarch Stone.

Gomp's phallus was long and girthy and his enthusiastic fucking would normally have been too much to take, but Habernalle's spell had another consequence - Dayna discovered that her various orifices could now accept any size of intruder. Her ass and cunt had stretched to fit like

a glove around both Trelis' immense ovipositor and Gomp's oversized organ. She closed her eyes momentarily and relished the feeling of her familiar's hefty shaft sliding in and out of her slick fuck-hole. She could feel every vein and ridge on the imp's massive tool and every time his smooth ball sack slapped against her clit a small shudder of pleasure rippled through her.

She opened her eyes again and looked back at the map. By her calculations, even with a good horse, it would take almost three weeks to get to the eastern reaches and she did not know how long after that to find the Redtooth Tribe. She looked back at the small statue in her hands. She knew that it was a carving of a demonic steed, also known as a Nightmare - demons that had taken the form of a horse with ebony skin and a mane and hooves shrouded in flame. Dayna knew they were intelligent and cunning and not to be underestimated despite their animalistic appearance, but Habernalle had said it would get her where she needed to go. She just needed to figure out how to get it to work.

"You almost done back there?" she asked Gomp. "I need to figure out how to make this thing work."

The diminutive demon's brow was knotted with effort as he pumped his cock into the mage's cunt. His hands were clenching her upraised asscheeks firmly and his thrusting was frantic and hurried. "That's easy," he replied. "Just put it on the ground and channel your will into it." Dayna's cunt squelched wetly as the small demon continued to hump vigorously while he spoke.

"Is that all?" said Dayna, "I thought it would be more involved, or that some reagents would be necessary."

"Well, they usually ask for payment or something once they materialize," said Gomp, before leaning forward and draping his small torso over the elf's ass to rest his cheek against her back. He reached around her hips with his right hand and moved it down between her legs and began to massage her clit with small, circular motions of his nimble fingers while continuing to make short, urgent thrusts into her quim with his engorged tool. "Knowing Habernalle, the it's going to be something fun."

Dayna hung her head, looking past her swinging breasts to watch her familiar service her needy cunt. He was rude, slothful and generally an embarrassment to be around, but his penis was delectably hefty and he certainly knew what to do when it came to fucking an orgasm out of the elven mage. "Oh fuck, keep doing that! You're going to make me cum!" she commanded her familiar before returning her thoughts to the task at hand. "So, what else do you know about these creatures?"

"Well... It's not a familiar, although it will be bound to your word. It won't stick around forever. Probably only a day or so before they have to go back to the realms to recharge," said Gomp as his fingers matched the rhythm set by his thrusting phallus and a wave of pleasure began to build in Dayna's overstimulated nethers. "Boss, can I cum now?"

The elf was on the cusp of orgasm herself. Her voice came ragged and punctuated with lustful pants. "Yesss," she moaned as her erect pleasure button responded to the imp's dexterous strokes, "fill me up!"

A moment later sparks of pleasure shot through her body and down her limbs as she peaked. Her body shuddered and her muscles tensed, causing her cunt to clamp down on the girthy slab of cock-meat stuffed into it to be rewarded by a sudden, gushing warmth as Gomp's swollen shaft began spurting ropes of imp seed into her. The hot jets of jism filling her fuck-hole dragged out her orgasm until her thighs quivered with the effort of keeping her pleasure wracked body upright.

"Mnph! Fuck yes!" she groaned, before sliding with a wet slurp off the demon's pulsating member to slump against her desk. Behind her, Gomp collapsed heavily on the chair and grinned to himself as he watched thick globs of his seed ooze in a small river out of his master's quim to streak her thighs and splatter onto the floor.

Dayna marvelled at the sheer quantity of cum the tiny creature could pump out as she felt it trickle steadily from her well-fucked orifice. "Damn, I needed that," she sighed, voice muffled as she rested her head on her folded arms and came down from her orgasmic high, "but playtime's over. Gather up my travelling gear and put two weeks of provisions in my portal chest. I'm going to go clean up."

"Sure thing, boss," said the imp.

When she returned from the bathroom, Gomp was just loading the final few bundles of equipment into her magic chest; a large, metal trunk, the surface of which was inscribed with various arcane symbols that connected it with a small pouch the mage could hang from her belt. As long as she was on the same plane as the chest, she could reach into the pouch and retrieve whatever was in the chest, no matter the distance between the two. It was one of Dayna's most treasured arcane artifacts, along with her staff.

"Is everything ready?" asked Dayna.

"Yeah, good to go," replied her familiar. "Two weeks of provisions and clothes, quill and ink, charcoal, paper, hook and rope, spare dagger, and your spellbook. I also threw your copy of Frobisher's in there."

"Good job, Gomp," said the mage. "I suppose we'd better do the summoning outside the walls. It might be a little tricky riding a demonic steed through the halls."

It was early afternoon by the time the pair had exited the city's eastern gate. A few farms spanned the distance between Drasich's bluestone walls and the woods that clung to the rising

sides of the valley the city occupied. Dayna had passed the time on their walk from the university to the gate by reading a little more on nightmares, their physiology and their role in the outer realms.

Frobisher had a fairly detailed entry on the demons. The bestiary explained that while their common form was that of an ebony hued stallion with a flaming mane, the demons could also assume an anthropomorphic form that retained many of their equine features but permitted them to walk upright on digitigrade legs and replaced their forelegs with humanoid hands. The bestiary entry went on to explain that, while often bestial in appearance, their great intellect set them apart from the common hellbeasts such as hellhounds and the like. Some had even risen to the rank of duke of hell thanks to their powerful combination of cunning, guile and vast strength. In deals with the material plane, they were often called upon by warriors and warlords seeking boons to aid in conquest and warcraft, however they were not singular in their attempts to gain souls and power and would work any deal they could. Dayna was thankful of the method of summoning granted to her via Habernalle's figurine; from the warnings written in Frobisher's Bestiary, nightmares were one of the more powerful denizens of the outer realms and she was fairly certain she did not have the ability to enact a proper summoning at her current level of skill and knowledge.

The mage and her familiar walked along the east road until the farms were replaced by the wooded valley slopes. Upon sighting a somewhat secluded clearing off to the side of the road and making sure there were no other travellers in sight, Dayna retrieved the small statue from a belt pouch and placed it on the earth in the centre of the glade. Gomp stayed well clear of the small figurine, half hiding himself behind his master.

"Well, here goes nothing," mumbled Dayna.

"Good luck," said Gomp from behind her.

Dayna stared at the demonic artifact and took a deep breath as she focused her will upon it. The process was a common starting point for most spellcasting - the latent arcane energy within all living things, in this case the mage, could be projected into reality with a push of the mind and the knowledge of how to shape it into the desired effect. Spells to create kinetic force and to subtly manipulate temperature were the easiest and most mages could push or pull objects and heat or cool a drink within their first year of study (there was many a hedge wizard who found gainful employment in the foodservice industry). More delicate telekinesis and stronger manipulation of energy took much longer to master. Spells of illusion, the manipulation of thoughts and emotions and conjuration or summoning were advanced magic and not to be undertaken lightly. Dayna was adept at conjuration and its sub-school of portal manipulation (a necessity for her masters in demonology), but she was not expecting what happened next.

As her will made contact with the figurine, a force seemed to take hold of it and the elven mage found that instead of having to push her mind towards it, the small statue was actively drawing

more of her arcane energy into itself until she began to worry that she was losing control of the energy coursing through her body. Just as she was preparing to sever the link, however, there was a sizzling crackle and a flash of warmth. The air above the figurine warped like a heat shimmer on a hot road and coalesced into the form of an eight foot tall, coal black demon. He (and he was very much a he) was sitting cross-legged on the earth where the figurine once stood. Where there should have been feet he instead had immense hooves, ringed with a fringe of flickering flame. His legs were bent strangely, bending backwards below the knee in the manner of a beast, and his thighs were broad and corded with muscle. His hips were trim and absent of clothes and between his legs flopped a huge, black, flared cock with a ring of prepuce about halfway down it. Dayna couldn't help but gasp at the monumental organ - it was easily a foot long - and the sight of such an impressive slab of male flesh sent a tremor of lust through her cunt. Above his pelvis was a rippling set of abs that looked as though they were carved from black granite. His chest was broad, with well defined musculature, and complimented by a pair of brawny arms and corded trapezii. All in all, his appearance was of chiseled perfection but for his bestial hooves and the equine head atop his shoulders. His eyes glowed like hot coals and a mane like a river of flame snaked from between his equine ears down his neck to end between his shoulder blades.

With a voice like a chorus of baritones whispering in unison, he spoke; "Ahhh, Habernalle's whore requires the aid of Aelsetur the Quick. Greetings."

Dayna steeled herself, straightening her posture and returning the demon's gaze. "Yes, nightmare, I require your service. You are to carry me where I command."

"You are Dayna, mage-slut of Duke Habernalle, yes? You may call me Aelsetur," said the hulking demon.

"Well, Aelsetur, you can call me Dayna, instead of whore or slut," replied the elf with as stern a tone as she could muster.

Aelsetur laughed, filling the glade with his rumbling baritone. "I am no bound familiar to be bent to your whims. I am here to convey the bearer of Habernalle's artifact where they wish, nothing more, nothing less. I shall call you what I please, elf cunt."

Dayna archly raised an eyebrow and produced the map from a scroll case on her belt. "Well then, donkey, I require you to take me here," she said, jabbing a finger at the Eastern Reaches. "Convey me to the village of the Redtooth Tribe in the Eastern Reaches." Dayna thought she saw a small smile play at the edges of Aelsetur's mouth at her use of the word 'donkey'.

"Very well, cum-witch, I shall carry you to your destination, but Habernalle has permitted me to demand payment in return," Aelsetur paused momentarily and looked Dayna up and down. His equine nostrils flared. "I can smell your cunt dripping from here. Come, sate your thirsting fuck-hole on my cock."

“As you say, you can only do what the Duke permits you. You are far more his servant than I am, you pathetic mule!” snapped Dayna. “But if you desire a taste of my quim, I will permit that in return for services rendered.”

“Ha!” snorted Aelsetur. “You have fire in you, elf slut. I like that in my whores! Come! Let us mate!”

Dayna held her chin high, trying to look as imperious as possible as she stripped off her robe and leggings. She was sure the impression was somewhat marred by the sight of Gomp hopping from foot to foot in lusty excitement behind her and the clear, sloppy strings of arousal that stretched from her wet pussy-lips to the crotch of her panties as she pulled them down. In front of her, Aelsetur leaned back on his hands and spread his legs, his heavy phallus pulsing and bobbing as it filled with blood and grew hard. Beneath his swelling tool, Dayna could see his testicles hanging heavily in his sack, each the size of a small melon, and her mind swooned at the thought of the sheer quantity of hot, slimy cum that would soon be pumped into her. A tremble of arousal spasmed through her body from her toes to her scalp and back down again. With only the slightest of hesitation in her step, she walked over to Aelsetur’s massive form and straddled his waist. Standing above him, his gargantuan cock bobbed inches below her hungry pussy. Another thin strand of glistening pussy juice oozed slowly from her spread cunt to dangle in the air before making contact with the flared head of Aelsetur’s bestial phallus.

Filled with an urgent desire to rut, Dayna lowered her aching cunny onto the demon’s tumescent erection. His flared cock was leaking a steady stream of slick, clear pre-cum and before her fuck-hole had even made contact with the girthy tool she could feel the heat radiating off it. A musky, animalistic scent filled her nose, pumping arousal straight into her brain and causing her nipples to harden and her cunt to gush with fem-lube. With lip-biting urgency, she mashed her quim against the nightmare’s swollen member.

Toddick Pengrast was a simple man. Nearly every day he drove a wagon of logs from a timber camp in the hills outside Drasich down to the city warehouses. He liked his job. The trip into the valley was peaceful and scenic and the city itself was full of wonders. Being home to the Arcane University meant that Toddick got to see many strange sights - mages and their demonic familiars were common on its streets and strange looking humanoids came from all over the lands to visit and do business in the former imperial capital. Today gave no indication it was going to be any different, and Toddick was soaking in the serene view of the forest in summer as his ox cart plodded down the valley road. As he rounded the next bend, however, he caught sight of a flicker of movement in a tree lined glade just off the roadway. Wary of potential robbers (not that Toddick had anything worth stealing, but nevertheless wanting to avoid a potential delay) he slowed his oxen to a halt and hitched them to a nearby tree branch. Then, proceeding as quietly as possible, he crept towards the clearing, hoping to scout out the area before continuing on his way.

The sight that greeted his eyes was simply astonishing. A huge monster with coal black skin and hair made of flames was reclining in the centre of the clearing while a comparatively tiny elf woman stood over his loins. Off to one side stood an imp (he had seen one in the market in Drasich before) in an obvious state of excitement. All three figures were completely naked - both the imp and the monster were sporting prodigious erections. The elf woman was beautiful; slender, tall, with fair skin, fine features and shoulder length auburn hair tied back in a ponytail, she had a gorgeous curve to her waist and pert, handful-sized breasts. She was also clearly about to stuff the monster's massive horse-like cock into her cunt. Toddick gulped. Surely there was no way that it would fit, he thought, yet the elven maiden lowered herself onto the column of cock-meat with nary a moment of hesitation. He heard her gasp as her folds parted and spread against the flared head of the bestial penis. The black monster lay back and reached up to the elf's waist, his hands easily wrapping around the petite, pale skinned figure. Slowly and surely, the beast pulled the woman down onto his cock and Toddick watched in amazement as the the elf's cunt swallowed the glistening black shaft, inch by inch. Instead of pain, her face was a rictus of excruciating pleasure. From his hiding place in the trees, Toddick pulled out his own cock and began to stroke it, eyes glued to the scene of total debauchery in the glade.

"Delicious!" announced Aelsetur as his massive dick was enveloped by the tiny elf's pussy. "Habernalle truly chose well when he made you his whore, cum-slave" said the beast of flame and coal.

"Do you always go on like a braying donkey when you get your dick wet?" said Dayna as the pillar of cock-meat slid into her. Despite her repartee, however, she couldn't prevent a small moan of satisfaction from escaping past her lips as her hungry womanhood was stretched around the swollen tool.

Aelsetur's monumental prick was burning hot inside her and oozed viscous, creamy pre-cum that mixed with Dayna's dripping juices to form an obscene lubricant that eased his entry into her needy quim. The elf had never felt anything quite like the heat radiating from the coal black dick and almost immediately an orgasm shuddered through her body as the wide flare rubbed along the walls of her magically adapted cunny. As her limbs spasmed with pleasure, she began bucking herself up and down on the nightmare's delectable organ, her pussy lips clinging wetly to the slick, veiny skin as she rose and fell. Aelsetur wrapped his huge hands around her waist and began dragging the mage up and down his shaft with a steady, relaxed rhythm. Relieved of the need to propel herself up and down the awesome phallus, Dayna simply hung limply in his strong grip and let the demon use her as a cock-sleeve as rivulets of pre-cum and fem-lube streamed past her stretched cunt-lips and down his iron hard schlong.

The elf and the demon were rutting like only beasts can. As the nightmare's inhuman phallus pistoned into her quim while pumping increasing amounts of hot, gooey pre-cum into her, Dayna quivered and roiled in one long, continuous orgasm, her eyes half closed, her mouth hanging open and drooling. Off to the side of the obscene display of primal lust, Gomp was rapidly

stroking his own distended cock. Almost tentatively, the imp addressed his thoroughly fuck-drunk master; “Uh, boss? D’you mind if I get in on that too?”

“Suuure... Whateverrr... Fuuuck meee...” came the slurred response.

“Come then, little brother,” rumbled Aelsetur, “let us fill this elf-whore with our seed.”

Gomp practically skipped over to the tableau of debauchery. Aelsetur released his grip from around Dayna’s waist and let her slump against his broad chest before gripping her asscheeks in each hand and pulling them apart to present the rosebud of her anus to the joyfully grinning imp. His master’s butt crack was already slick with the rutting pair’s combined juices, so Gomp simply placed his swollen glans against her sphincter and began pushing his shaft into the tight confines of Dayna’s arse. The sensation was exquisite and Dayna shuddered and spasmed as her holes were filled with two huge demonic cocks. The little demon could feel the heat radiating off Aelsetur’s cock through the thin layer of elf flesh that separated their tumescent organs and, combined with the buttery vice of his master’s anal passage, his cock exploded immediately. Blasts of imp cum spurted forcefully up into Dayna’s ass, bathing her insides in hot, alabaster cream and causing her to let out a long, ululating cry of pleasure. The imp’s refractory period was supernatural, however, and his tool stayed rock hard inside her ass. With a gleeful chortle, Gomp began fucking his cum into his master’s asshole.

From below the completely stuffed elven mage, Aelsetur let out a rumble of pleasure and moved his hands back up to her waist. The huge demon then effortlessly lifted the addled elf off his chest and held her still in the air while bucking his hips upwards to pump his horse-like cock into her quim. With Gomp’s oversized organ working her asshole and Aelsetur’s flared column of fuckmeat plundering her cunt, Dayna was a mess; adrift in a sea of pleasure.

Toddick watched as the imp mounted the elf from behind and pushed his red shaft into her ass. As the two demons began fucking the elf maiden senseless, he could hear sloppy, wet slurping noises and the meaty slapping of skin on skin, punctuated by various grunts, groans and moans from the three lewd figures. The wagon driver had already cum twice, but the vision of utter debauchery before him brought his cock to life once more. Even after he had sated his own arousal to the point where his dick ached, the two demons continued ravishing the elf girl’s cunt and asshole, using her like a toy. Toddick guessed by the way the little demon occasionally stiffened and cried out that he had deposited numerous loads of his jism into the insensate woman’s anus, but the two beasts kept at it until he saw the huge one stiffen and arch his back under the limp form of the elf.

With a deep, rumbling bellow, Aelsetur’s turgid cock suddenly swelled inside Dayna’s thoroughly used cunt before suddenly spraying a veritable torrent of seed into her. Her guts were already gurgling with buckets of Gomp’s rank cum, but Aelsetur’s volcanic ejaculation put the imp’s plentiful deposits to shame. Like a dam bursting, the nightmare’s horsecock blasted a sloppy flood of demonic cum into her and then pulsed and throbbed repeatedly as it filled her pussy to

the point of overflowing and the obscene fluid spurted out past her cunt lips in lewd, gushing squirts. Gomp pulled his spent tool from Dayna's now gaping asshole and staggered backwards to land heavily on the ground. The imp grinned broadly as he watched his much larger demonic brethren finish pumping his master's fuckhole full of seed while a steady stream of his own jizz coursed out of her recently vacated sphincter. The thoroughly used elf bucked and spasmed as her fuck-hole was filled, gasping and moaning as a final, quaking orgasm ripped through her. Finally, with a long, satisfied sigh, Dayna rolled off Aelsetur's chest and slid onto the grass, dazed and shivering slightly from the monumental series of orgasms.

A sudden, startled rustling from the nearby bushes brought her out of her post-coital reverie. The elf and the two demons raised their heads in time to see a man in peasant clothes trying to pick himself up off the ground while attempting to pull his pants up at the same time.

"Sorry! Please don't eat me! Ahhhhhhhhh!" blurted Toddick as he scrambled to his feet and ran into the forest, clutching the waist of his trousers.

Gomp collapsed to the ground, his body shaking with laughter. With an unimpressed glance at her giggling familiar, Dayna groggily got to her feet, cum oozing from her gaping pussy and asshole, and retrieved her clothes. Before she put them on, she cast her cleaning cantrip and felt the demons' sticky ejaculate wick from her skin. "Alright, mule," she said to Aelsetur as the large demon got to his feet, "I've paid your fee - take me where I wish to go."

"As you wish, cock-sleeve," said Aelsetur.

The nightmare stretched, blotting out the sky above the mage and her imp. Then, a long shudder rippled through his body and strange lumps appeared and disappeared in quick succession on his skin. The behemoth lurched forward onto his hands and his body warped and shifted until its form had changed to that of a large, sable skinned stallion with a mane of fire. The stallion walked over to Dayna and kneeled beside her.

With no small amount of apprehension, the elven mage climbed onto Aelsetur's back. Gomp hopped up behind her and wrapped his hands around her waist. Dayna could feel him nestling his cock against her arse, but just as she was about to tell him to stop, Aelsetur sprang to his feet, leaping forward as he did so. The landscape around the trio blurred and shimmered, flying past the wide-eyed mage with staggering speed. Pine covered mountain sides became green and brown smears while rocky cliffsides sped past them in a flicker of grey. At some point during the journey, Dayna thought they may have gone through a town - a momentary flash of stone walls and a blur of yellow thatch caught her eye - but in a blink they were flying onwards, the ground skimming under Aelsetur's hooves like a rushing river of greys and browns.

As if emerging from a tunnel, the mountains around the speeding demon and his passengers suddenly shrunk in size to be replaced in short order with a smaller, looming tunnel of trees. Aelsetur's pace became progressively slower as they travelled through the forest, eventually

becoming a fast gallop, then a trot, until he slowed to a walk before coming to a halt and dropping to his knees once more. Dayna and Gomp slid off his back, stunned by the journey that they had just undergone.

“Where are we?” she asked Aelsetur, her voice quivering.

Aelsetur’s voice echoed in her head, “We have arrived, cum-drinker. You will find your destination just down the trail from here.”

Dayna shook her head. “Thanks, I suppose,” she said. “You’ve served me well, you inbred donkey.”

Aelsetur laughed at the mage’s response, his form becoming hazy as he did so, until nothing remained of him but for the faintest echo of his baritone amusement and the small figurine sitting on a patch of dirt.

Left alone with Gomp on the forest path, Dayna finally gathered her wits enough to properly take in her surroundings. The sun was hidden by the thick canopy, but the light that filtered through the leaves had the distinctly russet tone of evening. The air was hot and humid, hanging heavily on the elf’s shoulders and causing a thin film of sweat to break out on her brow.

Gomp, naked as usual, seemed unbothered by the temperature. “That was fun,” said the irrepressible imp.

“Yes. That was... certainly eye-opening,” said Dayna, starting to walk down the path.

Through the trees ahead she could see a large clearing dominated by a hill surrounded by a palisade. Behind the palisade were a number of wooden huts with domed roofs. At the peak of the hill was a large circular wooden building. The path wound its way out of the trees and towards a large gate in the wooden wall, on either side of which stood two muscular orcs, one male, one female, naked but for stripes of red paint. Each carried a spear and had a large machete-like sword hanging from a leather baldric.

“I think I like these orcs,” said Gomp. Dayna could see him lewdly licking his lips as he stared at the female orc’s amazonian form.

“Gomp, stay near me, don’t touch anything or anyone, and don’t say a damn thing unless I say you can speak,” said the mage, attempting to pre-emptively head off any possible trouble the imp could cause. She paused briefly to cast a spell of translation before continuing towards the gate.

“Awww, you’re no fun,” mumbled Gomp as the two of them approached the orc guards. The two spear wielding warriors held their weapons at the ready as the pair emerged from the jungle,

and Dayna noted two more guards atop the palisade, both armed with bows. They had arrows knocked by the time the mage and her familiar were within shouting distance of the gate guards.

“Halt!” shouted the female guard. “Declare yourself and your intent!”

“I am Dayna Undreya Te’alor,” replied the elf. “I need to talk to your chief about a certain artifact your tribe has.”

“We are not accepting guests, elf,” said the male guard. “Go back to where you came from!”

“This is important,” said Dayna. “I need to speak with your chief.”

“Fuck off, or we kill you!” shouted the male guard.

“Damn it, this is urgent!” shouted the mage. Gripping her staff tightly, she strode towards the gate, concentrating hard on the archers at the top of the palisade.

“Here we go...” said Gomp from behind her.

“Kill her,” said the female guard.

The air around Dayna shimmered and the conjurer vanished just as the two archers opened fire. Two arrows thumped into the dirt where the elven mage had been standing only a moment earlier. “Fuck!” swore the female orc. “Another damn mage!”

Although she kept herself in good shape, Dayna wasn’t much of a hand-to-hand combatant, however, she was an adept conjurer and short range displacement portals were par for the course. There was a sound like cloth tearing, and suddenly one of the archers on the wall was surprised to find an angry looking elf standing next to him, piledriving her steel-shod staff into his gut. He doubled over in time to receive a vicious uppercut from the butt of the staff that sent him tumbling backwards off the palisade catwalk. His other bow-armed comrade spun quickly and was attempting to draw a bead on the elf just as another portal opened behind him. Gomp stepped out of it and punched the confused orc in the groin. The wee demon wasn’t the most brave, nor fearsome, of combatants, but he had surprising demonic strength and was more than happy to fight dirty. Unfortunately for his opponents, Gomp’s height resulted in the cockpunch being his favored tactic. Hunched over and groaning in pain, the orc could not stop the tiny demon from grabbing the quiver on his back and using it to haul the green skinned warrior off the palisade.

The two guards outside the gate shouted in alarm and turned to push the wooden doors open so they could get inside and get to grips with their foe. Dayna nimbly leaped down from the catwalk and was standing at the ready as the two spear wielding orcs entered. Just as they levelled their weapons at the mage in front of them, there was another tearing sound behind

them. Both spun on their heels to face the new threat, only to be greeted by an empty, fading portal. Dayna stepped forward and lunged with her staff, smacking the steel-capped end into the side of the male guard's head. While he reeled with the impact, his female comrade wheeled about, swinging her spear in a broad arc that only just missed the elven mage. Dayna danced backwards, concentrating once more, and the dazed male guard groaned as Gomp stepped out of a portal right before his unfocused eyes. With a wicked chortle, his stubby wings flapping madly, the imp sprang upwards to smash his nubby horns into the orc's face. There was a sickening crunch as the guard's nose collapsed and began gushing blood. The big orc collapsed onto his hands and knees in front of the tiny demon, who began driving kicks into his head and ribs, laughing maniacally all the while.

The remaining guard was flummoxed. Her comrades were lying on the ground in various states of pain, the air filling with groans and moans. Snarling in frustration, she lunged forwards at the elf, who displaced away once more.

Dayna called down to the warrior from her new position atop the palisade; "Your friends aren't dead. I don't want to hurt you. Just let me talk to your chief, please!"

"Fuck you, pointy eared bitch!" growled the orc.

"Enough!" came a bellowed voice from behind the furious guard.

Dayna looked up to see a huge, barrel chested orc marching down the path that led from the gate to the large building at the top of the hill. He was significantly larger than the orcs she had just been fighting and was accompanied by another ten brawny warriors. Feeling more than a little drained, Dayna was pleased that the big orc had decided not to attack right away. She wasn't sure if she could muster up the energy to take on the huge warrior by himself, let alone the coterie of guards he had with him.

"You cannot see our chief, mage, because we currently do not have one," said the huge orc. "If all you need to do is talk, however, I will listen. My name is Grotag - if you will agree to be under my custody, I will offer my protection that you may be heard among the tribe."

Dayna surveyed the groaning mess she had made of the gate guards. "I'm not sure I need 'protection'."

"This is clear," said Grotag. "But it is custom among us that outsiders be under the custody of a tribe member when there is no chief. You are clearly a person with power, and we respect strength here. If you have something to say, we shall listen. Just know, we are wary of magic. If I see one trick, if I smell any magic, I shall wring your neck myself."

"Fair enough," said Dayna, climbing down from the wall. "My name is Dayna, and I need to talk to you about a powerful artifact your tribe has."

Grotag shook his head sorrowfully. "You come seeking our sacred crystal?" Dayna nodded - a 'sacred crystal' fit the description of the Omnigarch Stone. "You are not the first," continued Grotag, "and the group who came before you has caused us much trouble. They are the reason we have no chief. They are also the reason we no longer have the crystal."

"Oh shit," Dayna swore. "Then I'm too late."

"What do you mean?" asked Grotag. "You know the thief?"

"Not quite," said the mage, "but I knew someone would try to steal it. I came here to warn you. A powerful demon has plans to use the crystal for a terrible purpose. If she has it already, it's probably too late. Who stole it? When was it taken?"

"The thief struck six days ago," said Grotag. "A group came to our gates seeking to study the artifact - a human, an elf and an orc guide. Our chief permitted them access. That night, however, one of them stole it. We were warned of the theft by the orc guide, but by the time we got to the place where it was kept, it was too late. It must have been the human who stole it, for the elf and the orc remained behind. The human must have been a mage for her to escape so easily - we searched far and wide for her, and we know these lands well, but our trackers found no trace. Our chief exiled herself yesterday out of shame."

"Wait, you said the elf and the orc remained behind?" said Dayna. "Could they not tell you who this human was or where she went?"

"Well, that is more complicated," said Grotag. "They are under some sort of spell. I shall take you to them. You are a mage, perhaps you can help them."

Dayna's heart sank. Gaermeon had the Omnigarch Stone and a week's head start. The future was bleak.