

The floor is sticky. It is an old, molassesed stickiness. It sticks to her skin: the backs of her arms, her whipcord muscles, her hair, her heels, her soles. Her cheeks. Just enough that she feels it. Just enough to make the occasional idle thought wonder why.

The shades do not come into these chambers, not while the stories play out. (Does it still? Maybe it loops. Light still spills out over the backs of the chairs; Bella is a silhouette against the vaulted darkness above.) The chances of a crew member walking in— choosing this place, at this time, to watch this story— are... unimportant. It's probably not going to happen. It's fine. As long as they keep their voices down. Their mouths occupied. Their bodies low, down here, on the floor between the rows. There is not quite enough room. This is not a problem so much as it is a challenge.

Besides, they are both— have both been— maids. And maids are good at cleaning. Tidying up. Using whatever tools are at hand, even if they're a tongue pulled over a subtle sweetness, a subtle tartness, the salt of sweat even in the middle of this treasure-palace of the dead. Another musical number; maybe the story does loop back around, playing out forever and ever and— she pulls Bella down more, kisses everything she can reach, rubs herself against the other girl, lets herself be selfish. Selfish together. Selfish in catching up.

Her fingers dig in, thumb pressing down on the base of her tail, and Bella lets out the tiniest, cutest squeak. "Shh shh *shhsh*," Dany giggles, and Bella nips, tugs, sucks on her throat, and when they shift, the base of a chair is pressing into her hip. But that doesn't matter.

*"Even sitting upon the tongue of the Unseen One, live— live— live." Bella sits with her hands busy with clothes-shaping, the delicate decoration, as Redana lets the words roll through her. Her father's side of the family: Zeus and Poseidon and Hades. The poetry is for them. Not hers. It's just one of three hundred verses she'll need to prove she can recite. But the shape of them can fit all of Tellus inside, hidden between two lines. And here, it's just the two of them— no, three. Beljani is on a downer, something that makes her pupils large and her movements slightly disconnected, as if each one requires a different move on a game board, and she's got a basket in her hands which she dumps out next to Bella, who gives her a Look and then asks, with such self-control, cool as ice, the curl of her lip suddenly more arresting than the poetry, if this looks like the fullonica, or— no, it's just that only she knows what to do with the laundry? Well. That's. Fine, actually. Thank you, Beljani. And the moment sticks in Redana's throat like something sticky, like a frog? Like...*

Like the floor under Bella. Her three nails on each hand dig into Dany's back, all heat, the flesh sure to close. The marks don't last. The bruises will fade. So it's okay to mark, to suckle, to let Bella knead her shoulders with little pinpricks that make her gasp into their shared breath.

Bella has the best mouth in the universe. Not just her voice, but what she does with it: the weapons that are her lips. Bella has the best breasts in the universe, bigger than handfuls, warm under Dany's hands, Dany's lips, Dany's whole face. Bella has the best hands— and even though sight is a thing of Auspexes here in the dark, Dany doesn't need to look when she slips

the two gentle fingers into her mouth, bobs her head, flicks her tongue around the soft places where fingernails should be. All of you, Bella. All of you.

All of you when you are demanding. All of you when you are inviting. All of you means all of you. Your fingers, your eyes, your curves, your cream-sweet breasts, your hot and inviting sheath, your voice and your mouth and your tangle of limbs in the dark, on the floor, while the songs come one after another after another. Your palm, clamped over a cry of ecstasy; your tongue, as rough as a strigil and just as useful; your breathy mew as Dany plays with your pearl.

Even sitting on the tongue of the Unseen One, live— live— live. And not even Lethe will make her forget, Dany swears without words, cuddling in that cramped space, running that magical hair through her fortunate fingers.