

M4F [Healer/Cleric Listener x Knight Commander Speaker]

note: the idea is to set up contrast between almost brusque knight commander at first and the mess that follows

[ambience; healer's workshop... bubbling, crackling fire]

[knock on door]

Keep Witch? Knight Commander [use your name if you use one, or] Thorfinn. Might I enter?

You are settling in all right. I see you already have something decocting. Anyway, enough small talk. As Knight Commander of the Keep I thought I should introduce myself since my knights will be under your care.

Good to meet you.

No, thank you, no tisane necessary. I won't take up your time. Do you have any familiars we need to keep an eye on?

No? Well, let me know if you do so they don't get shut outside. Have a pleasant day, Witch.

[ambience down and then up]

Will she be all right?

Of course, which lamp? This one? There you go. Do you want me to hold it?

+tight sigh+ It's been a long while since one of mine was injured. I feel rather like I failed her. Her horse had been too long in the stable and we were not on our guard.

She will?

A concussion. That's survivable.

Yes, I can help. [lamp set down] First you need to unbuckle this row of straps on each side. [leather buckles unfastened, clink of armour - pan lids will suffice] Then we lift this aside. Do you need the gambeson unfastened? [another buckle] What are you doing?

Listening? [voice drops to a whisper] Oh, I see.

[break for a few seconds]

No broken ribs?

That is a relief too. You know, it is a pleasure to watch you work. You move very efficiently.

You are welcome. Are her limbs in tact?

No, she was not dragged, she was bucked off but hit her head awkwardly on landing.

Thank you again. Not just for watching her, but for my being able to have absolute faith in her safety in your hands. I promise not to visit like an anxious parent every hour, but send for me if I am needed. We are riding out an hour after noon to check on a warlock sighting, but we'll be back before nightfall, I'm sure.

Well then. Until later, Witch. Thank you again.

[ambience fade out and up, but without the bubbling]

[knock on door]

Witch, what on earth were you thinking!

I hear from the gate guards that you were out in the woods before dawn!

Then you should have informed me so I could provide you with an escort. We have warlock bandits constantly in those woods! What if you had been mistaken for one? What if one took you hostage, or worse?

You understand that a bad thing not happening once does not change its likelihood of happening later, yes?

+sigh+ +creak of chair or stool+ You are... vital... to the care of my troops. While we have a midwife and a surgeon available, you are our only healer and potion maker. You are simply too great a resource to lose.

Please, could you stop working for a moment? I feel as though you are not taking this seriously.

+muttering, repeats her+ I'm not, she says.

Can you look after yourself? Someone who looks after themselves would take a guard.

Bother them? That is their job! Fine, take me instead, I am largely ornamental.

I— you— I... I did not mean to be vain, you need not tease me.

Of course you were teasing, why else would you compliment me? Enough. This is not negotiation. From now on, you take me with you when you go herb hunting! All right?

It's fine. I don't sleep much and I'd only worry if you didn't. It's settled. [exertion as he stands up]

What?

Who told you about my shoulder?

You can't tell from looking, I am very careful about that.

And that's what you see... damn... Yes, I'd appreciate a salve.

Thank you. Until tomorrow then.

[ambience down; ambience up: feasting hall]

Why are you off on your own, witchling?

It is indeed... peopley in here. Hey, you're going to crush that mug to dust. Give it here... Come with me...

What? I... I'm sorry, do you not like your hands touched?

Well. it's not fine, you flinched. But I'm not going to question you in front of all these people. Come on, you've shown your face in front of everyone, your presence has been marked. Follow me.

[door opens] After you. [door closes]

[As they walk along, the noise from the hall fades out to nothing]

I can't stand the big feasts either. Convivial eating and drinking with friends is one thing, no one needs to have that many people in one place. But if they leave people out it gets noticed. We were attacked on a night when I was a lad. A warlord bandit who struck when half the castle was in one room. It was... horrific.

I killed him. It's how I got my promotion. [door opens and closes] So I always come out here.

[night ambience]

The ramparts give a view of the whole keep this way, and out over the cliffs this way. Look... come here so I can point. That glimmer there? That's the temple at Arranridge. And there... that's the village of Hannick.

And this... is a flask of mead I purloined on our way out. +laughs lightly+

Your face. Here, have some.

[bottle unstoppered and drunk from]

Thanks. [he also drinks; note just in case, mead us a liquor so it's not a down-a-pint-at-once deal] +satisfied sigh+

I come up here when I need quiet, but all I want to do is ask you questions. I'll limit myself to saying only this: the way you... recoiled when I touched you. I hope you know I'd never hurt you. And that if someone *is* hurting you, whoever they are—

All right, I'll take your word for it. +sips mead+

[companionable silence]

The salve you gave me for my shoulder works wonders.

Yeah. Here you go. [mead bottle changes hands again] Oh, day after tomorrow we're off on a sortie, so if you need herbs we need to go out tomorrow.

I'm sure. I like getting to walk again... to be out and about without a target or defence in mind. I admit my thighs felt it the first few times. But I think I keep up all right. Give me the mead, you honey hog! +chuckles+

[ambience fade down] [ambience fade up: workshop, with bubbling etc]

[door bangs on hinges]

[optional collab/alt voice: Witch! Commander got hit by a warlock! Please!

Put him where? The table?

What... magic... he got hit by frost first, but the last thing, the guy put his hand in the Commander's face and made this gargling sort of spell, and the Commander just fell backwards.

Yeah, been unconscious since.

Tog got in behind the warlock, took him down. You're gonna save him, right, Miss Witch?

Right?]

[ambience fade down; ambience fade up: trippy. this sequence is inside the commander's head so feel free to throw your fx into a blender; some of the lines are reused, it'd be fun to retake them warmer, with more emotion, because in his head he can't hide from the otp i force upon him!]

I'll see you when I get back.

I want to see you when I get back.

I can't wait to see you when I get back.

Why can't I wake up?

It's been a while since one of mine was injured. I can't let that happen again. I won't let that happen again. I will not stand back and let anything happen to my knights.

Where am I?

Why do I feel so... untethered?

Hey there, Witchling. It's weird. You look... different.

No, that's not you. You're more beautiful than this. Even first thing in the morning, you're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

So this is how you see yourself? Huh... probably a good thing. If you saw yourself the way I see you... you'd be as vain as the day is long.

You are... vital... to me. You are... the reason I greet the morning with a smile and the reason I go to bed before midnight. Where are we?

In my head?

Why?

Oh... I... think I remember...

I can't let it happen again. I won't let it happen again. I... I thought I could get to him before he got a spell off. What's... going on?

I... see... so you're... pulling me back together?

You won't get hurt, will you?

Hey, hey, you're not going to lose me. I trust you, witchling. You'll show me the way.

That's the temple at Arranridge. You're so close. I can smell woodsmoke and herbs in your hair. That's the village of Hannick. And your breathing... You breathe so quietly but up here on the ramparts I can hear you breathing, and I never felt so soothed in my life. +whispers+ I'm so in love with you. So completely head over heels and I have no idea what to do. I brought the mead so you could relax. And I wanted to kiss you, I ached to kiss you, but... you flinched.

Do you not like your hands being touched?

That's not it?

Slow down... you... you were just... surprised?

Our hands must have touched before then.

Just when we shook hands? You were jumping, not recoiling. Did you like me touching your hand?

I want to hold your hand. I want to touch your fingers with mine and kiss your palm.

We were in the bluebell wood looking for wild yarrow, and you stumbled, but I was not fast enough. I wanted to touch you, to catch you, to hold you. I spent the rest of that morning feeling your lips phantomlike on mine, a what if kiss that wasn't.

The whole troop knows I adore you. I've caught them shooting each other looks when they've caught *me* watching *you*. A couple of them were caught hungover on duty and the clever tykes started talking about visiting you after training, about how clever you are and you'd definitely help, and they slipped away while I was thinking how right they were.

And trying to think of an excuse to go see you again.

I wish I'd kissed you on the ramparts. In the woods. In your workshop. Every day. Every time.

Witch... do you like me too? Do you love me too? Why would you? I love you. I love you. I'm so in love with you. And I don't know what to do.

I don't know what to do.

Just... breathe?

+deep breaths, in and out+

[ambience of the workshop returns]

+deep, sucked in gasp of air+ Aurgh... my... head... I... Oh... Thank you, my Witchling.

Hey, wait... stay here a moment, please. Don't call anyone... I... was wrong.

Not about loving you, you utter goose. About not knowing what to do. I know exactly what I need to do. May I? Please?

[smooching]

Now, see that... was the right thing to do, my beautiful, clever Witch.

I love you.