

## 70: *Widowmaker*

"All this time... Those few slices I shared with... Dead men floating downstream..." Olivia kept mumbling quietly.

"Aw, cheer up!" Ember tried to cheer up the ninja insincerely and patted the hunched girl on the back. "It's not like all the meat in this city comes from corpses. There are also rats, maybe a small birdie, if you're lucky. And some salted pork does make it into the city from time to time—"

"YOU KNEW!!" Olivia screamed and kicked Ember's hand away. "You knew all this time!"

"Yes, and?" Ember asked, clearly annoyed as she rubbed her lightly bruised wrist. "I warned you not to eat the meat—you didn't eat any. What more do you want, you annoying little twat?"

"Fuck you! How can you be a part of something so disgusting!?! How long did you know!?"

"On second thought"—Ember turned to Bernard—"I think you better remove this one's tongue."

"With pleasure," the lionkin chuckled and took a step toward Olivia.

"Back off!" Olivia grabbed her kunai and leaped backward to gain solid fifteen feet of distance between herself and the lionkin.

"You think you're out of reach of my Widowmaker?" Bernard grinned menacingly as he grabbed the hilt of his claymore.

"No one is getting their tongues removed," Beatrice said and stepped between Olivia and Bernard. She kept a firm tone but did not raise her voice, purposefully, to deescalate the situation. "Not today, anyway."

"You heard the lady, Bernard," Ember smiled to her friend.

"Well, now," Bernard grinned and let go of the hilt of his claymore. "When was the last time someone willingly came in front of my Widowmaker. I suppose if the courageous, big-breasted beauty values her comrade's tongue that much, I'll let her keep it for now."

"Thank you," Beatrice said, glad to resolve a stupid conflict so easily. Then she looked at Ember and said, "And you—stop provoking her!"

"Alright, alright," Ember waved off Beatrice's remark. "If you're that fond of your new toy, fine. But, my Lady, if that girl keeps it up, she will not just get herself killed—she'll put you in danger as well."

"You'll have to be a little bit more understanding of her shock at the discovery that the citizens here are unwittingly being turned into cannibals," Beatrice said.

One of the cheap negotiating tricks that Beatrice had learned in her past life—half of it is in the voice. As long as she managed to get her own emotions under control—speaking calmly, even slower and softer than usual, always provided a much better result than engaging in petty shouting contests.

And it was easier for the succubus to get over the repugnant discovery, as at the very least she did not have the misfortune of getting served corpse meat. On the bright side, she no longer felt hungry, despite having eaten nothing but some apples the entire time since she got here.

With things deescalating, Olivia also put away her weapons. Beatrice even thought that she saw the ninja breathe a sigh of relief.

“Though I find it strange that no one noticed this all this time,” Beatrice said. “How long has this been going on?”

Ember and Bernard glanced at each other.

“I’m sure that where you come from, you have marvelous feasts that would make our king jealous, if he hadn’t melted what few brain cells he had left,” Ember said.

“Where does a beauty such as yourself come from?” Bernard asked Beatrice.

“Not now, you horny bastard,” Ember cut off the lionkin. “As for how long... Let me think... Three? No, four. I’ve known about this for four years. But this has probably gone on in one form or another for over ten years, as this place became increasingly isolated. It always starts with cats and dogs in besieged cities.”

“And when was the last time someone ate fresh chicken or pork to know the difference?” Bernard asked. “Any proper meat that we do get here is already half-spoiled anyway, even with what little salt they can spare to try and preserve it.”

“Ugh, can we, please, not talk about this anymore?” Olivia asked. All three looked at the ninja girl.

With the adrenaline from the sudden threat of a fight to the death wearing off, the ninja looked even paler than before.

“Agreed,” Beatrice nodded. “This one evening might be enough to fuel my nightmares for a month.”

“Do you have nightmares?” Ember asked.

“I—” Beatrice froze mid-response. *Do succubi have nightmares?* As far as she knew, succubi are supposed to invade the dreams of others. She even had proof of this in the form of a [Dream Invasion] Skill that was still out of her reach.

But Beatrice had only just become a succubus. Or inherited the system of one. In whatever way Luluna’s god powers worked that created this whole situation. *So, when a succubus sleeps, what do her dreams look like?* Beatrice wondered. *Do succubi even sleep?*

“Let’s find out,” Beatrice said.

Ember questioningly tilted her head and raised an eyebrow.