



Migratory Birds
Chapter 13

BILL

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Every day the sun reached its zenith unhindered by any clouds. Around noon, the chirping of the birds died down as they hid away until the sun approached the edge of the canyon again and the shadows intensified, small spots of comfort. There were only the swallows who were still flying around, drifting on the cool air flow the river carried along on its way from the north. If not for this little wind the heat would have become totally unbearable.

The inhabitants of the town called Jaulesse, tried to deal with the heat as well as they could. During afternoon the kids of the town dashed towards the river, taking a dive in its cool water. Those who had work to do, got rid of as much clothing as decency allowed. Of course, there were those who did not even worry about decency. These were mostly boat people who did not have to mind the disapproving glare of the townspeople for long. They were usually gone quite quickly because the stone, the houses and the roads were made of, stored the heat and in the small lanes of the village the cool wind did not reach every corner.

Sweat drenched the furs of the people and even members of those species with sensitive noses got used to its constant presence. Everyone was equally affected by the weather. But those who revealed parts of their bodies got many looks because the sweat made the fur stick to their skin and the curves underneath became visible unlike during any other season when clothes hid away the shapes of the bodies. Everyone knew about it and dressed accordingly, some taking of their shirts, jackets or blouses whenever possible, some others choosing specifically wide clothing that did not reveal too much and still guaranteed a significant ventilation.

While the headfur was allowed to hang down in damp strands, dangling seductively whenever its wearer moved its head, the chestfur was carefully combed and curried as it was usually visible due to the absence of most clothing. It was a nice contrast to the sticky fur that covered the rest of the body and it emphasized the chests, no matter if they sported a bosom or none at all.

Spane was usually dressed in his skimpy boiler suit, baring his entire chest and thus proudly showing its muscles. Ama was dressing as usual, the marmot did not seem to be affected by the heat at all. Whenever somebody asked him about it, he replied the temperatures might be as high as in his kitchen, but that was something he was used to. Dealine usually wore a light jacket and a shirt with bare midriff and a short leather skirt. The heat really got to her, but it was nothing compared to how it affected Jiddy. The lynx girl's fur was so thick that she would have wanted to go naked if she had been allowed to. As soon as she started working in the morning she was instantly soaking wet from her own sweat, her usual clothes did not make any difference. But even the lynx girl tried to make the best of her appearance, every morning she cleaned and combed her chestfur carefully and- as Spane noticed to his delight- her pubic fur as well.

But the lynx' amount of activity decreased significantly. No matter how much Jiddy tried to stay awake as soon as she sat down, she dozed off, conforming to the worst feline stereotypes. Dealine was not sure if she had to be amused or annoyed, as Jiddy's constant sleepiness was definitely a handicap. Usually Jiddy

became much more active as soon as the sun disappeared behind the edge of the canyon. Consequently Jiddy was much more adventurous when it came to certain nighttime activities she shared with Spane. Because of that she was irritable during daytime, the many people got on her nerves and despite belonging to a nocturnal species she could not handle the constant lack of sleep her relation with Spane demanded. She wanted to get away from him, at least from time to time, his constant presence was not what she wanted, but when he stood in front of the café, reeking with male sweat (a scent that never missed to affect her) all her intentions were gone almost instantly. The marten turned up at any time of the day, sometimes bringing her small presents, flowers, pastries or even a fish. Jiddy usually ignored the presence of these tokens but Dealine knew that Jiddy paid them attention as soon as she thought herself to be alone; and Spane seemed to know that too. His presence distracted the lynx girl, it was fun how he was always around her, but she became quite erratic and had to focus real hard just to go on with her usual work. Him, making certain amoral proposition didn't help it either, especially when he slipped them into harmless flirtations. She was unable to solve the most simple calculations when he was about (having enough trouble with that anyway), having made her compliments or having mentioned certain incidents only the two of them could know about. She never replied anything but he knew when she tensed to keep control of herself.

Dealine tolerated it, even though Jiddy was hardly reliable when Spane was about. More than once the marten asked her if Jiddy could have a break and usually Dealine gave in, as she was certain that the lynx was certainly not reluctant to go along with what Spane had in mind. It was fun to watch the two youngsters, although she did not fully understand Jiddy's reactions: When the marten was about, the lynx girl was even more taciturn than usual. But Spane did not seem to mind, he hardly seemed to notice at all and in the end Jiddy was always by his side when he asked her to join him, even though they rarely exchanged even the most innocent of caresses in the skunk's presence. But whenever Jiddy came back the feverish anxiety that had marked while the lynx girl had been around Spane, had disappeared. Instead she was strangely calm, going after her work with unexpected purposefulness.

Dealine did not really like Jiddy to be around Spane all the time. On her mind his visits became much too frequent and much too annoying, she was much happier to see Jiddy dealing with Gelly. Her daughter had become really fond of Jiddy who was fooling around with the young otter girl in such a wild, unrestrained manner that Dealine could hardly imagine any better playmate for her daughter. Even when they played Knight and Bandit¹ and Jiddy dropped dead all the time, she never complained about the dullness of the game. Whenever Gelly caught her, the lynx girl feigned her death, gurgling wildly, rolling her eyes, lolling her tongue and then dropping down as if the hard, wooden floor was a bed of feathers. Gelly had been laughing all the time and had been so over-excited that Dealine had had a hard time to get her to bed somehow. But Jiddy made that up by going to the river with Gelly. Dealine rarely accompanied them, being busy with her work in the café. Ama eyed her strangely whenever she told

him that she sent Jiddy to guard Gelly, Dealine did not understand what that had to mean as she rather doubted that he disapproved of her high-handedness to offer Jiddy some free time.

Jiddy had been feeling tired. Her neck had been terribly stiff and her feet had hurt. All the time her tail wagged, showing her irritability to anyone who cared about looking. The night before had been quiet long, Gelly had woken her early as Jiddy had promised her to accompany her to the river once again. Dealine had seen that Jiddy had not been in the mood at all, but the lynx did it anyway.

The café had been unusually crowded. Dealine was hardly able to handle it all by herself but she did her best as Ama tried his best to handle the many orders too. The marmot did not loose a word about Jiddy not being there.

He had also wanted Jiddy to help him but the lynx girl had already been much too busy.

Around lunchtime most of the costumers had finally left, there was only a group of lazy old shrews left who were nibbling on some fried insects and ordering some more coffee from time to time. Fortunately nobody seemed to be interested in having lunch.

The musicbox played some of its strange, distorted music.

Dealine had sat down, having a cup of coffee.

Suddenly the swing door opened and Ama came out of the kitchen. The big marmot stretched himself. "Goddamn!" He shouted towards the shrews: "Everything alright?"

The shrews nodded and greeted him.

Ama nodded in satisfaction. "Do you have got a coffee for me, Dealine?" he asked the skunk.

"Yes, sure!" The skunk jumped down from her chair, went around the bar and poured some coffee into a mug which he handed to Ama a moment later.

"Thank you!" he said, smiling at her and taking the mug out of her hand. "We must be careful, we can't afford real coffee for ourselves all the time," he mentioned.

"We deserve it this morning, Ama," Dealine replied.

"Yes, definitely," he said and drunk some of the coffee. When he gulped the hot liquid down, he closed his eyes, his entire face distorted, then he powerfully shook himself and gasped afterwards.

"Tired, soldier?" Dealine asked playfully when she had sat down again.

"Don't..." He oomphed when he sat down on one of the barstools himself. "...tease me, Dealine or I'll get my old rifle."

"Are you sure you could get that far?" the skunk returned.

Ama was quiet for a moment. "Today's Veterans' Day in Ty Houanouk," he mentioned casually.

Dealine looked up.

"I was wondering if we should close the café for tonight, so that I could celebrate..." He looked into his mug.

"Celebrate? You?" The skunk smiled ironically. "That sounds like a contradiction to me."

He looked up.

"You never even mentioned some such holiday before," she added.

The cook inhaled. "Well..., maybe you want to celebrate with me?" he suggested seriously.

Dealine suddenly started to chuckle.

The marmot stared at her.

The shrews were talking lowly, one of them suddenly laughed too. Her clear voice was echoing through the empty café.

Slanted sunlight shone through the windows.

"That reminds me that Gelly's birthday is coming up..." Dealine said thoughtfully.

Ama looked at her.

The bell above the door chimed, when Gelly rushed inside.

"Speaking of a dark spirit...", Dealine said with a smile.

"Look!" she cried out, running towards her mother. "Look, what Jiddy made me!" She held a roughly carved piece of wood in her paws that sported a large leaf as a sail.

Some of the shrew had observed the otter girl and her skunk mother with a smile, while others had preferred not to notice.

"That's nice!" Dealine mentioned.

Meanwhile the bell chimed a second time and the lynx girl came in too, joining the three furs.

Gelly had sat down on her mother's lap in the meantime and moved her ship as if it was sailing across an agitated ocean only she could see.

Ama looked at Jiddy and their eyes met for a moment, before the marmot looked into his mug again. He emptied it with one fluid motion.

One of the shrews noisily cleared his throat.

Jiddy looked around.

"We want to pay up!"

"Comin'!" Jiddy said and went over to them before Dealine was able to react.

While Jiddy settled the shrews' bill the bell above the entrance chimed.

"Fish! Here comes the fish!" a well-known voice exclaimed and Spane marched into the café, carrying a heavy crate with dripping wet content.

Ama who just turned his head said: "Just put it in the kitchen!" and Spane obliged, walking through the swing door, disappearing for a moment.

He came back, wiping his paws. "Damn my back!" He ignored the looks of the two older furs at the bar and walked over to the lynx girl who was just about to clear the table the shrews had left. The marten stepped right behind Jiddy and gently put his hands at her hips. "Hi, there!" he cooed into her pointed ear.

She was instantly surrounded by the fishy odor of his boiler suit, but her sensible nose distinguished the mark of his hard work: He was- as usual- surrounded by the musky scent of male sweat too. Her tail had been wagging strongly since the moment he had stepped into the room, now it trembled erratically for a last time and got stiff afterwards.

"For you!" He turned the large blossom of red cress² between his fingers.

"Thanks," she mumbled.

"Hm!" He buried his muzzle in the fur of her neck and pressed a kiss against her skin.

She held her head to one side. She could feel the blood rushing into it.

"Are you in for a break?" he asked when he had finished kissing her. "I could need one."

Jiddy turned around and looked at Dealine.

The skunk nodded almost invisibly, Ama observed her anyway.

"kay!" she mumbled and fully turned around, holding the dirty dishes in her paws.

"Wait a moment!" he instructed her and fastened the red blossom in her hair next to her ear.

She flicked it nervously.

He grinned at her. "Let's go!"

"Can I come with you?" Gelly exclaimed loudly.

"No, you stay here with me now," Dealine said instantly.

Jiddy put the dirty dishes on the bar counter and then just pointed towards the back door of the café when they walked past Dealine and Ama.

Dealine just nodded.

"Tell me, how long is this going on?" Ama asked the moment he heard how the back door was shut.

Dealine shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know for sure," she replied.

"This isn't serious, is it?" Ama asked with concern.

Dealine rose her eyebrows and shrugged her shoulders. "I don't think so."

Ama was looking at her, he expected her to go on, but she did not. The marmot pulled a face. "I hope she knows about his notorious attitude," he remarked. "Did you warn her?"

"I am not her mother, Ama," Dealine said. "I mentioned it. Besides, she definitely isn't stupid."

The marmot blinked. "I don't doubt that, but she doesn't know him."

The skunk sighed and looked straight at him. "What do you want from me?"

"Nothing," the cook replied quickly. "I am just worrying about her. That's all." He paused. "Jiddy lives with you, you know her better than I do."

Gelly had observed the two adults, still eying them occasionally, before she went on playing around with the roughly cut ship.

The skunk had grabbed her tail and picked some dirt out of it. "I don't!" she stated. "But I know that she can watch out for herself. I do not have to treat her like a child. She is a roamer, after all. That's more than I can say about myself."

Dealine started when she felt a paw upon her shoulder. She stared at Ama in surprise. She had not expected such an intimate move from him.

Gelly had looked up too.

"Don't make an old woman out of yourself, Dealine," the marmot said with utter conviction.

"I am a single mother if you haven't noticed yet. I don't feel like allowing myself to have great expectations, Ama!" she replied.

For a moment the marmot looked into her eyes. He hesitated. The small eyes behind the old-fashioned pince-nez were focused on her but he did not seem to notice her at all. Suddenly he took his hand off her shoulder and turned away again.

Dealine was still somehow startled, she was not sure what this had been all about. She looked at his shape from the corner of her eyes, but he was motionless, looking at his empty mug as if he could find some answers inside it. The skunk blinked. "Now, are you hungry?" she asked her daughter.

"Yes!" Gelly replied.

In no time Spane's hands had found a way under her shirt and at her breasts that he massaged slowly now, consciously enjoying the feeling of her nipples sprouting from their surrounding fur. He pressed himself against her back, so that he could hold her close, kiss and lick her neck and so that she could feel his stiff member beneath his trousers too.

"How's your day been?" he managed to whisper between a kiss and a lick.

Jiddy could feel how her instincts reacted to him, she could feel how her heartbeat quickened, how she tensed and how a certain, well-known dampness spread between her thighs. She did not want to let go now, the rational parts of her brain were telling her that this was anything but what she wanted. But on the other hand her instincts called out to her and in between these two she was unable to do anything at all. As usual in such situations her mind was already a mess, every coherent thought she tried to cling to slipped through her mental fingers as if it had never existed at all. It was as if her entire head was filled with blurred, elusive shadows as it was slowly invaded by unwanted pleasure. "kay," she was able to reply.

He nodded, brushing his short muzzle against her neck where her fur changed from brown to white. "Good." He exhaled and his sour breath waved around her muzzle. "I missed you. I always do! During work I imagine what we could do..." He grinned and showed his short carnivorous teeth for an instant before he nibbled at her chin. His fingers sunk deep into the fabric of her breasts when he kneaded them slowly and pressed them against each other. "Did you miss me too?"

The pleasure she got from his careless caress was nothing special, nothing she did not know. But nevertheless she quivered slightly as tiny sparks were rising inside her and relaxed her despite her intentions. There was a feeling of weakness inside her stomach. She gulped.

It was a sunny day with few clouds. The river murmured weakly and the whole canyon was brightly illuminated as the sun shone down on the entire town, the small harbor, the boats and the warehouses behind the café. There was nobody who could see them there, on the small strip of land behind the café, even though there were some furs beyond the warehouses they looked down on, walking up and down the street. Maybe they could have seen over the warehouses if they had raised their heads but they could never had distinguished anything specific as

they were much too far away. So they did not see how the marten pulled the lynx' shirt upwards and exposed her chest.

"Your tail says you missed me, hm?" Spane remarked gently in reference to her short, stiff limb.

The cloth she usually wrapped around her breasts and that he had already loosened dropped to the ground now. His hands moved freely now over her breasts, roughly grabbing them, squeezing them, pressing her touchy nipples before he let them go again and just stroked them for a some time while they engaged in an uncomfortable kiss. She had turned her head around until their mouths could meet and despite the ache in her neck she enjoyed the presence of his tongue between her lips and inside her mouth, the smooth, slick limb that caressed her mouth from inside and that she could intertwine with whenever she wanted to taste him upon her own raspy feline tongue. She could feel their mixed salivas flow down from the corner of their joined mouths and quickly they renewed the kiss so that they could feel the smoothness of each other's lips again. Then their mouths opened fully again and their tongues reached out while his hands were still at her breasts. He cupped them, pressed them and slowly moved them to her delight while his tongue circled around hers. One of his hands let go of her breast, travelled downwards, brushed over the firm muscles of her belly and reached out for the belt of her shorts. He undid it with experienced moves and her shorts dropped to the ground.

She broke the kiss. "What y'doin'?" she panted.

He grinned. "I think you are in for a nookie," he said and in this moment his hand wandered under her loincloth, ran through her pubic fur and an instant later two of his fingers were already pressing between her labia. Just like he had expected his fingers met a distinctive, pleasant moisture between the hot, swollen lips and his discovery caused a barely hid, self-satisfied smile upon his lips. His heart started to beat faster.

When his fingers met her touchy sex, she trembled and her breath got faster because her instincts kicked in and his fingers became a source of pleasure she did not want to miss no matter what. Her longing had already gotten the better of her, she quivered in anticipation of what was yet to come, promises of imminent pleasures clouded her mind, even though she was still feeling a strong resistance deep inside her. She growled warningly. Her heart skipped a beat when his fingers left her mons alone an instant later.

He pulled his hand out of her loincloth and held it up, close to her hand. "There's no denial!" he said, showing her the fluid that stuck to his fingers.

Her juice was smelling strongly, it instantly got into their nostrils. His sex hardened even further, pinching almost painfully in the prison of his trousers, while her own female juice charmed her. Its scent swirled teasingly around her nostrils and called on her lust and her desire. It attracted her and before she even knew what she was doing her tongue was licking off his fingers and the taste of her own sex spread inside her mouth. It was exciting and satisfying her. The taste and the scent of a female sex was a delight to her and it added to the effect the male marten had on her. The dexterous tongue ran over his fingers and carefully

licked off her own lubricant and it caught her attention while his other hand went down to her hip again, loosened her loincloth that dropped down a moment later. Hastily his hand searched for his own trousers and skilfully he undid the buttons of his fly until his hard member popped out and settled between her buttocks.

His hand moved away and shortly she tried to get at it again but in this short moment he had already grabbed her hips, positioned his sex and thrust forward. She snarled due to the fast, careless entry. But a moment later a rush of ecstasy reached her head and she shuddered strongly when she grasped that it was his sex that was inside her and that her inner muscles enclosed it and adapted to its shape. Her blood inside her labia pounded strongly against the hard shaft they surrounded. Her juices flowed freely.

He was panting too. It was as if his loins and his legs were completely weightless. "It's always the same with you! You always got to kick about first, right?" He pulled backwards, rolling his eyes when his sex glided out of hers. He grabbed her hip more strongly and with a grunt he pushed forward again until her firm butt pressed hard against his lap and a cold shiver of pleasure shot from the tip of his tails to the very ends of his headfur. Without restrain his sex glided out of her again and quickly he shoved it back inside her, seeking the peak of pleasure her hot, moist sex offered him.

She wanted to speak, but it was nothing but a growl that escaped her lips as in this moment she could feel his member mounting inside her with deliberate power and it took her breath away. It was like an electric shock, but instead of pain it released pleasure and while she was still savoring its after-glow she was already craving for more and he was not denying it to her, no matter how much a rational part of her brain wanted to stop this. But an instant later she could already feel how his member retired again, her inner muscles rippled over it, her clit already missed the pressure and a feeling of emptiness started to spread inside her abdomen. It was almost some kind of happiness she experienced when he shoved it back inside and she got another dose of joy. Instinctively she had bent forward and now she supported herself against the wall, so that his movements hit her with full power. There was no space for objection left now.

The quickening pace of his hammering heart set the rhythm of his movements. When he pushed his member inside her he could feel how her craving inner muscles gave way and how her lovejuice wet his sex and these feelings were so over-whelming that he regretted the moment his loins met hers and he had to repeat it as quickly as possible. But the moment he pulled out her inner muscles rippled around it, tried to hold his sex back and her entire sex contracted around his shaft and this feeling too was just as desirable and thus he had to continue as quickly as possible. Within a few moments he was ramming his loins against hers without any gentleness and he enjoyed it immensely. He panted above her. Once again he stared at her backside where his member disappeared inside the tight hold of her sex: Her entire backside was so perfectly shaped and her abdomen was so strongly muscled that her hold was so exquisite and so powerful at the same time that he could hardly grasp it. Her tail was stiff but bent sideways so

that it was no obstacle and did not screen anything from his view and just beneath it, between her spread buttocks was the ring of her tailhole he looked down upon: It was partly furless and glistened with sweat, its edges rubbed against each other whenever he moved her. Her buttocks shifted around the tight hole. "I bet you're going to like this..."

She let go a frustrated growl when she felt like his sex slipped out of hers but an instant later he repositioned it again just beneath her tail and she uttered an instinctive snarl just before the pain kicked in.

His paw held his hard member in place while he pressed the glans into her body again which tore the tight muscles apart.

Her fangs and her teeth clenched when the pain burst through her, every fiber of her backside seemed to be broken when the glans pushed in, stretched her muscles wider and wider until her tailhole gave in and the glans slipped through so that the muscles clenched around the member and moments later the ultimate pain reached her head like a delayed shot, overcame her with its violent intensity. She hissed between her gritted teeth.

Spane moaned as his member was so strongly pressed together while she tried to overcome the pain which ravaged her backside, almost every muscles cried for release, made her focus on his member which stuck inside her, between her buttocks, just beneath her tail and the member's mere presence made her senses painfully accurate but also did allow her to escape her, it was too painful, but beyond it there was a promise of pleasure. His knot pressed against the inner side of her tailhole while the round shape still forced her open and she clamped so strongly around it that she felt every unevenness, every vein upon its surface. Unbearably slowly the pain subsided and accordingly her muscles relaxed and adjusted to him while the pleasure equally overcame the pain. And thus her senses expanded again and she was able to feel him again, his furry abdomen and his balls pressing against her crotch, her firm buttocks holding the hardness of his member which reached through her tailhole, inside her.

He felt like the cramp vanished and let her buttocks go, instead he held her with one hand while the other grabbed her short tail and held it up so that he could see everything of the tight ring of muscles that held his sex. Every fiber of his trembled, the mere tightness of her hole had brought him very close to the brink. The urge and the slight pain of his hemmed member had mixed, a powerful ray had pierced through him, had pushed him outwards so that he perceived even the faintest impressions of his body, especially where they were joined and his tight full balls slightly touched her wet opening and her hole's muscles hold powerfully onto his member while his glans rocked freely inside the cavity within her. He exhaled and then grabbed her more thoroughly and shoved his member upwards into her. Moaning with pleasure his member was engulfed by the warmth of her backside, his glans quivered inside her soft bowels when the length of his maleness was pushed through her hole's muscles which held onto it like an iron ring even though it was much warmer and smooth because of her juice his dripping wet member spread. As slowly as his burning desire allowed it

he went on, every inch a new sensation as she still clamped that strongly thus showed him how she felt.

His movement spread into her, she felt the shape of his member much more real than ever before as she perceived even every inch like never before and a strange kind of pleasure like ice cold water, almost painful but equally satisfying flowed into her. Short gasps escaped her throat, the dulling satisfaction of her desire had almost gone and instead had been replaced by total awareness of her body's reaction, her nipples being caressed by the cool air that flowed around it, her furless pads against the wall, her tail he held, her anticipating opening dripping wet, lingering passion swirling around in between her thighs and her head. His member pressed down deep inside her, the pressure of his loin against her was proof that he was fully inside her and she quivered when she grasped that, nervous joy spreading throughout the fabric of her body.

Spane enjoyed like she was still clamping around him, surrounded him with her warmth while his glans touched against her insides, a faint but thrilling sensation which mixed with the pleasant tickling of his tightened balls, having found a soft resting place in between her swollen labia whose fluid ran down his legs. He let her tail go just to take hold of her hips with both hands again and thus he held her in place as he pulled his member out of her. After all her tail was stiff and thus offered him a perfect view upon their interconnected limbs, the bulging fabric of her hole around his sex. He moaned as his member was gliding out, dragging behind her strongly tightened ring of muscles until his glans touched the inner limit and he shoved himself up again. His hands holding her backside seemed to dam up all of the desirable heat as her entire backside burned while the rest of her body was still anticipating its share. She was supporting herself against the wall, holding her upper body vertically so that he had free access to her backside and so that his member entirely filled up the cavity of her tailhole. The feeling let her blood run cold for an instant before the warmth came back, set off by her insides caressed by the shaft passing by until he was fully inside her again. The feeling triggered a sparkling sensation in her mons that rose into her loins and eased the remaining pain. She panted in time to his slow rhythm, instinctively aware that all of his sex was fully inside her as if she could be proud about it.

Carefully he pulled out until his glans touched the tautened ring and then he slowly pushed it inwards again, letting her warmth gather around his member that seemed to power his entire body, every single movement or reaction of his from the nervous twitching of his ears, to his sweating pores and his strong hold of her firm buttocks. There was a strange impression of growing, just like his head was about to recede from his crotch and even the tickling of his hands and feet hardly reached him anymore. With a mindless, happy smile on his lips he moaned while he moved into her instinctively. Her heartbeat made her ring tighten and loosen around his member just like the cavity behind adapted to the introducing member and surrounded it with its softness. She moaned quietly as she enjoyed it how her sex was being stimulated indirectly, like her insides throbbed against his stiff member.

Suddenly his glans just like his entire member seemed to grow, without thinking he accelerated his pace. His balls tightened even further and with a last, fast movement he shoved his member back into her up to the hilt, the unexpected power let her hole clamp around the limb and this was enough to send him over the edge. Holding her hips as tightly as possible his glans exploded and the intensity of this feeling shot through the member, into his loins, up his spine to hit his head. Closing his eyes, moaning he let his mind fall apart, his entire body sparkled like drowning in a fountain of soda. Despite his closed eyes he could see flashes of light dancing around him and he gave in entirely to these impressions of his crumbling body that had been torn apart by his climax.

She felt him come as his member DID grow in size and first she readied herself for the pain but then he stopped his movements when his member was deep inside her, quivered strongly and stimulated her even further. She gasped as the brutal caress let her entire abdomen burn with pleasure and pain which got powerless in the very same instant and she let go to enjoy the sensation which was slightly altered by the feeling of his semen shooting into her hole, a hot fluid which filled her bowels with every new jet of the limb whose twitch caressed her insides. She shivered and her knees got powerless. She struggled to keep standing while the throbbing member was still fully inside her, its presence giving her the carnal satisfaction of containing the whole of his sex. She panted.

The marten rolled his eyes and grunted as he lost all strength. He let her backside go while his member still quivered slightly within her and after a moment the boy slowly pulled it out, gliding on a coat of his semen. One last time his glans passed by her inner muscles then it stretched her ring which gave in easily and then it was gone.

His semen dripped on the ground while his member splashed some last drops of his juice on her back. He was panting heavily and a stupid, happy smile flitted over his face while he eyed the lynx' back with whitish stains of his sticky semen that convinced him that she was all his now. For a moment he could see scars on her back. But the exhaustion let him almost lose his equilibrium and he made some stumbling steps backwards to keep standing. "That was awesome," he exclaimed breathlessly. "I always wanted to do this."

Jiddy inhaled deeply and slowly turned her head.

Spane was stretching himself, trying to handle the sudden drain of power. He looked up when she stopped by his side.

Her fist hit him with full power and he was thrown on the ground, overcome by pain and surprise.

The lynx girl stared down on him. Her narrowed eyes glistened. "Never! Never fuckr me in thr' ass witho' warnin'!" she hissed, hardly able to pronounce clearly.

The marten rubbed his cheek where she had punched him and glared at her. "Come off!" he hissed. "You damn enjoyed this too!" He rubbed his muzzle with his forearm before he stood up.

"Shutr thre fuck up!" she growled.

"Oh, please! You behave like the perfect slut and now all of a sudden...!"

“Whoah!” He narrowly dodged a slash of her claws.

From the bottom of her chest, Jiddy was growling ferociously.

“Watch it! My patience is wearing thin with you,” he warned her.

“Your... fuckin’ what...?” she hissed. She had her ears laid back and her tail was restlessly lashing about.

“My patience!” He thrust his head forward. “My patience, stupid! I run after you all these days, trying to goddamn please you and now that’s what I get out of it? A punch in the face?”

She looked at him, eyeing him wildly for a moment as she tried to grasp what he had just said. Then slowly she started to understand and her eyes narrowed while she bared her teeth.

But he had anticipated her reaction and grabbed her arms before she could move. Her muscles tensed and he found it much harder to hold them than he had expected.

His face was no right in front of hers, their muzzle almost touched and they stared into each other’s eyes.

“Do you really think that you are so damn beautiful that I couldn’t resist your charms or what?”

She struggled, but for now he was still able to hold her. Her attempt had not really been serious.

“Why don’t you just take a look at yourself?” He paused. “Do you really think I would have wasted any time on you if you weren’t so damn cock-hungry?” He smirked at her.

She was breathing strongly. Her face was contorted and her feral teeth gritted.

“The only thing good about you are your ass and your blow-jobs!”

He gasped for breath when her knee sunk deep into his crotch. Instantly he let her arms go, holding his sex and moaning in pain. “Damn... slut...,” he gasped.

Jiddy was quivering in anger. She could feel like her claws tried to unsheathe but she forced herself to hold them down, even though she was furious.

“Damn you...” The pain was still intense, it was like a implosion had taken place inside of him and tried to swallow him whole now. Even though he struggled to keep standing he gathered his remaining strength and moved towards the door. He glared at her one last time. “You are going to regret this, slut!” he hissed through his teeth. Then he opened the door and went away as quickly as he was able to.

Ama who stood in the kitchen watched after him in astonishment. Then he looked towards the door and saw the totally naked lynx girl. He looked at her in surprise.

She was still breathing strongly. As she had been looking after Spane, she needed a moment to realize that Ama was watching her.

Their eyes met.

Quickly she turned her head away, staring to the ground.

Ama went towards the back door and closed it.

Jiddy was all alone in the tiny garden behind the café again.

She grabbed the blossom that was still in her hair and violently pulled it out, along with several tufts of hair.

As usual there were the sounds she had gotten used to by now: The river, the town, the sounds from the small harbor, the shouting of playing children. And as usual the sun was high in the sky and its light burned down on everything, some last, small clouds were about to be fade away.

Slowly she gathered her clothes that had been scattered on the ground. Dry earth stuck to them because they had stepped on them. She did not bother to wipe it off. She cleaned her backside with her loincloth and then dressed negligently. Her tail was still wagging strongly, but she had closed her mouth, hiding her gritted teeth away.

All of a sudden her fist slammed against her forehead with full power. "Stupid, stupid fuck..." She hit herself several times until colors danced in front of her eyes. For a moment she closed them and focused on breathing slowly.

Finally she went back inside.

Ama looked after her as soon as the back door had opened. "Can I help you?" he asked.

"No!" she said hard and went towards the other end of the kitchen.

"Do you want me to ask Dealine to...?"

"No!" she interrupted him and then she went through the swing-door and left Ama alone again.

The marmot looked after her and sighed. He leaned on the table in the middle of the room.

Suddenly the swing door opened again, Jiddy came in, carrying a basket of fruits, she put it down and went outside again, not looking at Ama at all.

The cook sat down on a small stool, he supported himself on his elbows and stared into nothingness.

As promised that day started differently.

Gelly was awake the moment the sun had risen above the horizon and ran around in the apartment like the over-excited furball she was. Of course, Dealine and Jiddy did not have a chance to sleep any longer. Especially Jiddy was angered because she had not gotten much sleep at all. But she tried to keep her moodiness at bay because she did not want to spoil the birthday Gelly obviously enjoyed so much.

As soon as Dealine had gotten out of bed, Gelly was standing in front of her and recited the Wenaussan Poem³:

"When above Wenaussa rose the moons
and the stars were all up in the sky,
its children colored their furs with dye
and went into the forest to ask for boons.

With their loved ones on their mind,

holding each other by their hand
they swore never to disband
and left and not one stayed behind.”

The skunk was so happy that she would had hugged her daughter for good if Gelly had not been much too excited to stand her mother’s proof of affection any longer than absolutely necessary. In no time the slick otter girl had freed herself and ran around in the apartment again, teasing Jiddy who had hoped to be safe inside her sleeping bag. But it was more than obvious that there was no escaping Gelly today.

During breakfast the otter girl was slowing down a little bit as she was obviously enjoying the strange fruit⁴ her mother had bought from a trader on the boats.

“Now who taught you the Wenaussan Poem?” Dealine asked her daughter while pouring herself another mug of chicory coffee to fight off her almost overpowering tiredness.

“Old Miss Karda did,” Gelly replied with her mouth full of orange pulp.

“Old Miss Karda?” Dealine made a sign towards Jiddy, that meant that this name belonged to one of the squirrel women from the apartment below.

Jiddy did not even nod as she was yawning like only a feline could, exposing her sharp teeth.

“Well did you thank her?”

“Yeash,” Gelly replied happily, her mouth full with another bite of her fruit.

“That’s good!” Dealine stated. “But maybe we...”

She stopped cold when there was a knock at the door.

Dealine looked at Jiddy in surprise.

The tired feline shrugged her shoulders.

The skunk stood up, went to the door and opened it.

“Ama!” she said in surprised.

“Good morning,” the marmot said cautiously. “Is it too soon? I was not sure... But I wanted to be here before you left for the temple, so... If you are not ready I can wait downstairs.”

“No, no...,” the skunk replied, still much too surprised by his unexpected visit. “Come in!”

“Thank you!” the marmot said and stepped inside. “Happy birthday, Gelly!” he said towards the otter girl. “I have got something for you.” He held out a small package.

The otter girl looked at the marmot in surprise, jumped down from her chair, went over to him and took the cloth-clad package out of his hands.

“What do you say?” Dealine noticed, readjusting to the unexpected situation.

“Thank you!” Gelly said obediently, put down the package on the table and quickly undid the cloth, exposing a small, but beautifully decorated fruit cake⁴.

“I made it myself,” Ama explained to the girl who was staring at the cake.

“Thank you!” Gelly cried out, instantly pounced the marmot and hugged him as strongly as she could.

“Woah! Don’t break into a sweat!” the cook laughed.

Dealine wanted to exchange a look with Jiddy, but the lynx girl’s attention was resting upon Ama and Gelly. Once again one of those shy smiles had shown on Jiddy’s lips that she hid partly behind her paw, but then she lowered her face and looked to the ground and the smile was gone again.

“Well, why don’t you sit down!” Dealine said quickly, trying to gain control of the situation again.

Gelly let go of Ama and the marmot sat down on an wobbly extra chair Dealine had pulled closer. The otter girl sat down on her chair too.

“Do you want to eat with us?” the skunk asked.

“No, thank you!” Ama replied quickly. “But if you have something to drink...”

“Of course!” Dealine took her own mug, poured some chicory coffee into it and handed it to him.

He looked at the mug, then smiled in embarrassment and sipped cautiously at the hot fluid.

Dealine observed him carefully, he avoided her eyes as good as he was able to.

“So how old is our birthday girl today?” Ama asked Gelly.

The otter girl showed him six fingers.

“Six summers, already? My, times passes quickly does it?” He laughed.

“By the way, when’s your birthday, Jiddy?” Ama looked at the lynx.

Jiddy had not paid attention and she looked up in surprise, straight into the marmot’s friendly face. She looked about, facing Dealine who seemed to be just as interested as Ama. “Er... I... winter,” she said quickly.

“Well, that’s a while until then. Give me the precise date when we get close to it.”

A nervous twitch went through Jiddy’s tail.

“By the way, how did you know the precise date of Gelly’s birthday?” Dealine asked him. “You never...”

“I remembered!” he said simply, interrupting her.

Dealine rose her head and her made some movement that could have been interpreted as a some sort of a nod. “Well, we better get ready for our visit of the temple now!” Dealine mentioned.

“But I want a piece of cake!” Gelly interjected.

“No, you can eat after lunch!” Dealine replied. “We really should get going now!”

Gelly pulled a face.

“Up! Up!” Dealine shooed Gelly from her chair and the young otter girl trotted into the bed room, her mother following her.

Ama emptied his mug of chicory coffee, put it down and stretched himself. “Gods, I am tired today.” He stood up and started to clear the table, Jiddy quickly started to help him because the marmot did not know where he had to put the stuff.

Soon Dealine and Gelly emerged from the bedroom again. The otter girl was now dressed in a red and brown leather, it was a complicated dress of several leather patches that were tightly wrapped around her body and fixed with leather

straps. The patches were decorated with white snail shells and small colored stones. Gelly's hair was bound into a long ponytail. She smiled broadly, wearing her dress with obvious pride.

"You look beautiful!" Ama said honestly.

"Yeah!" Jiddy agreed, nodding.

Gelly swirled around on the spot. "Mom made it for me!"

Dealine suppressed a proud smile. "Well, I hope everyone's ready to go to the temple!"

Ama instantly went to the door and opened it for Gelly. Dealine went after her.

"You coming?" she asked Jiddy who hesitated.

"Yeah," the lynx girl mumbled and went after the three furs.

The road to the temple was at first an old supply road for one of the abandoned mines. They went across the town, Gelly hopping ahead, joyously displaying her birthday dress. The townspeople they met greeted her or waved to her.

Before they left the town, they chose a small lane and moments later they walked across small gardens. The road was old and over-grown. They came past the gaping dark hole in the rocks that had once been the mine. Cool air swirled around them, coming up from invisible depths behind the fallen rocks and collapsed supporting beams. From there their way was nothing more than a neglected path at the edge of the canyon, leading through thick-leaved, resistant bushes and small, gnarled trees that had been able to grow on the dry, rocky ground. They left the town behind when they walked around a ledge and below them was nothing but rocks and the river. Birds chirped in the trees.

Finally they walked around another ledge. The path led them to rocks which extended to the river. In front of them a single tip of rock overlooked the canyon below. The rocks had shaped a hollow in the side of the canyon. Above it an old, huge oak with few leaves grew and its shadow almost completely hid the entrance of a cave. In front of it was a small space, freed of rocks and bushes. Despite the dry ground grass grew here and a huge number of rods was planted into it, they were decorated with discolored straps of cloth and leather that fluttered in the wind.

On the narrow path Gelly had been walking in the first place, closely followed by Dealine who had carefully watched over her, Ama came next and Jiddy was last.

"It's strange..." Ama said to Jiddy when she walked over the last rocks before the small strip of grass. "...you never meet anybody here, but there are always new flags."

Jiddy looked at them while they followed Dealine who had taken her daughter by her hand and walked straight into the cave.

The cave was not very deep, but larger than it had looked from the outside: It had a curved outline, instead of occupying the space beneath the rocks the oak rested on, it turned towards the side of the canyon and thus it was spacious enough to accommodate at least a dozen furs at once. Indirect light illuminated it well, the bright color of the rocks reflecting enough light to reveal the simple, almost crude, possibly very old paintings that decorated the walls. Where the

walls of the cave met the ground someone had carved a rectangular, horizontal hollow out of the rocks, approximately at the height of an average furr's knees. It was not any higher than the length of a forearm. This hollow was full of offerings, small bowls with (now dried) fruit, flowers, roots, clothing, small clay bowls and pots, carved pieces of wood and many more. Most of this was in different states of decay and yet it still looked strangely beautiful as if it had been supposed to be this way. Almost opposite the entry, a little to the right, where the stone wall led deeper into the side of the canyon a statue had been carved out of the rock or at least something like a statue: It was the torso of a female furr from her thighs to her neck, it was stretched out as if the rest of her legs and her head were still hidden somewhere in the rock behind her. Her hands were turned outwards. Beneath the figure was a small platform of stone, full of more offerings. But what attracted every visitors' sight first was the mummy of a furr that sat beside the statue in the rock: Its fur was still attached to its shrunken skin that hardly covered the bones underneath, the skull revealed that it once had to have been a rat or a mouse. The mummy still wore a simple, brownish tunic that hid its body away.

"That's the last priestess of the Goddess who lived in our town," Ama explained quietly to Jiddy by his side who stared at the mummy. "She is guarding this temple until a successor arrives. Only the oldest inhabitants of Jaulesse have still met her."

While Jiddy had studied her surroundings Dealine and Gelly had started to spread their offerings beneath the statue in the stone. Dealine had carried along some fruits and she handed them to Gelly who carefully placed them in a bowl whose content had disintegrated to dust.

In the meantime Jiddy started to study the paintings that covered every inch of the walls: There were some pictures she could easily recognize, images of different animals, a starry sky with the three moons above a river, trees bearing fruit. But there was one big picture whose meaning did no reveal itself to her: It occupied almost the entire right half of the cave. She needed a moment to understand that it was actually a series of pictures the artist had put into one great arrangement. There was something like towers or other tall buildings, something like birds flying around them, then there were buildings falling apart, amorphous shapes with faces floating in between them, small figures running about, trees under a night sky, six more collapsing buildings in different colors, one intact, black one between them and more running figures, maybe haunted by dark amorphous (that was not clear) shapes and then there were small figures in a peaceful landscape with the three moons and a female bosom above them.

"Please, Goddess, Mother of all things living, bless my only daughter and protect her from harm for another year of her life!" Dealine had folded her hands and bowed her head in front of the stone statue. By her side Gelly imitated her mother, sometimes eyeing the mummy. Everything was silent inside the cave while Dealine and Gelly prayed.

Jiddy eyed the otter and the skunk and felt a little bit out of place. Judging from the nervous rustling of Ama's clothes, the marmot felt the same.

Finally Dealine and Gelly finished, they bowed down one last time.

“What’s that picture?” Jiddy asked Ama, pointing towards the large painting on their right.

“That’s the fall of the Age of Dawn..., “ The marmot pointed at the pictures of the tall buildings. “..., the Spirits’ War, the time of the Mystic Empires...,” His index moved towards the six collapsing buildings. “...and the present.” His finger stopped at the peaceful landscape under the three moons.

“And the black one?” Jiddy asked, pointing at the black tower that stood unchanged between the six falling towers of the Mystic Empires.

“That’s Feydaroo,” the cook replied. “Black Pit,” he specified.

Jiddy looked at the painting, now entirely transfixed by it. The black building had attracted her interest the moment she had looked at the picture for the first time but now she was unable to take her eyes of it. Her tail started wagging.

“Finished?” Ama asked Dealine who approached him, leading Gelly by her hand.

The skunk nodded and smiled.

The marmot returned the smile and suddenly knelt down so that he could look into Gelly’s eyes. “So what does our birthday girl want to do now?” he asked her.

“Go to the bakery!” Gelly replied instantly.

“Alright, let’s go there!” Ama said.

Gelly cheered and instantly dashed out of the cave.

Dealine was torn between running after her and speaking to Ama. “You know I can’t afford that!” she said to him before she ran out of the cave too.

“Don’t worry!” Ama yelled after her and wanted to go after them when he realized that someone was still standing behind him. He turned towards Jiddy. He was surprised to see her standing there, still staring at the wall painting. For a moment he tried to distinguish what she was looking at, but he had no success. “What are you looking at?” he asked her finally.

“Tharr...” The lynx girl cleared her throat. “What happened to... Black Pit?”

“You don’t know?” he asked in surprise.

Jiddy shook her head.

The marmot inhaled. “I would expected you to know that, after all you are from the east, but... Well, you I guess you know that the Mystic Empires tried to resurrect the sciences, the magic and the technology, of the Age of Dawn. But all of them failed sooner or later and the Mystic Empires fell apart. There was only one remaining: Feydaroo, that means *Enclave of Hope*. Some people say it was destroyed too, but others claim that it turned into the exact opposite of what it had been supposed to be. You know the horror stories! People say it still exists today, somewhere in the far east, but who knows...? I’d say it is just a myth just like the rest of these stories.” He looked at the picture too for a while. “It’s a beautiful painting though. I just don’t understand why it is here. I would rather expect to find something like that in a sorcerers’ guild or something like that.” He adjusted his pince-nez.

“Are you coming?” Gelly yelled into the cave.

“Come on, Jiddy, we better do not keep Dealine alone with that jumpy, little furball,” Ama said.

Jiddy did not react at once, she was still eyeing the wall inch by inch. But then she quickly turned around and followed Ama who led her out of the cave. She had to blink in the bright sunlight, it hurt in her eyes much more than usual. Having stared in the darkest corner of the cave had its effect on her.

“Let’s go!” Gelly cried out.

“Yeah, let’s go!” Ama agreed.

Dealine sighed almost inaudibly (it was not lost to Jiddy’s pointed ears though).

The lynx followed the skunk who- in turn- followed Ama and Gelly. Jiddy looked down at the path beneath her feet, the stones in her way and the tiny shadows they cast. She felt tired, possibly because of the heat.

Jiddy was lost in thought during their walk back into town. She did not notice how Ama fooled around with Gelly and how Dealine observed the two, happy and anxious at the same time. “Feydaroo“, the name swirled through her mind.

The skunk was happy to see her daughter having so much fun. But Ama’s unexpected enthusiasm was still irritating her...

When they came back into town. The usual business had taken over the streets and the townsfolk. The few small shops had opened and displayed their goods on small stands in front of the houses. Some of the craftspeople worked in front of their shops too, enjoying the good summer weather. They greeted Ama when he passed by. Few greeted Dealine as well.

The over-excited otter girl was running ahead, leading them towards the little bakery, the only one in town, which was usually providing the bread for the café.

The two doors at the front of the shop were wide opened and the smell of wheat, rye, millet, spelt, leaven and barm had escaped into the small square in front of the building.

The scents of the different breads, cakes and pastries distracted Jiddy. She had been preoccupied until now. But as usual her thoughts had been too chaotic to lead anywhere.

“Yay!” With a joyous cry Gelly jumped up the stairs in front of the the small shop and ran into it that was nothing but a single room with a large wooden table for the goods on the right side and a single chair occupied by an old rat woman. She stood up when they entered the shop.

“Ama! What are you doing here? I thought you took a day off?” she greeted the marmot.

“Oh, I am, I am,” Ama reassured her. “Actually I took the day off because today’s Gelly’s birthday and she wanted to come here.”

“Ah, I see!” the rat said and turned towards Gelly. “Tell me, how old are you, young lady?”

“Six summers!” Gelly replied proudly.

“Oh, that’s mighty impressive! So now that you are here, what do you want?”

Jiddy had not followed into the store, she was still standing on the steps, in front of the door. It had not been lost on her that the rat had ignored Dealine all the time, it was pretty obvious that she had no intention to notice her. The skunk did not seem to mind though, at least she did not do anything about it, instead

she observed her daughter who was eagerly studying the cakes and pastries that were on display.

"Hello there!" The door at the back opened and another rat woman came into the shop. "I was right that I heard your voice." She was much younger than the older rat and wore an apron and a headscarf that hid away most of her hair, except the ends of two large pigtailed. Her swollen belly showed that she was expecting a child soon.

"Hello, Mirmaille!" Ama greeted her. "I thought you were asleep at this time of the day!"

"Oh, Holy Mother, I can't! Somebody is keeping me awake all of the time!" She pointed towards her belly.

"Soon she won't be able to work anymore! Then I will take over the bakehouse again," the old woman replied.

"You wish!" the younger rat replied. "I won't let you mess with my bakehouse, mother. Not if I can help it! I will work again as soon as possible, even if that means that I have to carry my cubs through the bakehouse all day."

"What about your husband?" Ama asked.

"Oh, Holy Mother, no! A baking man!" She shook her head. "He is much more useful at looking after the purchase of the ingredients, trust me!"

"Whatever you say," Ama said with a smile.

For a moment they watched Gelly who could not decide between the many different items that were on display.

"I want that!" the otter girl exclaimed finally, pointing at a heap of small round cakes that were stuffed with berries.

"A fine choice!" the old rat woman said. "These are Moonfire Balls, made with turnip and bilberries. How much do you want?"

Dealine had just opened her mouth when Ama said: "Give us a full bag of them!"

The skunk stared at the marmot for a moment. Finally she closed her mouth.

The older rat woman had picked up a paper bag and filled it with the round cakes. "Here you go!" She handed the bag to Gelly.

The otter girl smiled broadly.

"What does a good girl say?" Dealine asked, talking for the very first time since they had entered the bakery.

"Thank you!" Gelly said politely.

"Oh, never mind!" the rat said, smiling at the otter girl. When she looked up her eyes met those of Dealine: The skunk's features showed no politeness. The rat woman looked away.

Meanwhile Ama had counted some red gems and handed them to the younger rat woman.

"Thank you, Ama!" she said.

"Don't mention it!" he replied. He turned towards Dealine and Gelly who held the huge paper bag in her paws, happily looking at its content. "Let's go!"

"Bye! See you tomorrow!" Ama said when they walked out of the bakery.

The four different furs walked down the streets. Gelly was first in line, proudly carrying her loot.

"You know that I can't pay you back," Dealine said lowly to Ama.

"Forget about it! That was on me! It was my idea anyway!" Ama replied.

"But... why are you doing that?" Dealine asked.

"Hrm! What could I possibly do with all my savings anyway?!" Ama said. "If it makes her happy..." He smiled at Dealine.

But the skunk was looking at Gelly and did not seem to notice.

They were heading towards the harbor.

There were currently only two ships lying at anchor. So there was not much business going on. Most of the workers were occupying themselves with odd jobs or dozing in the sun.

The four furs sat down at the very end of the harbor. There was an old landing stage nobody used anymore, it was situated right next to a small garden with a tree which cast some shadow over it.

Gelly instantly sat down on the edge and eagerly opened the paper bag. Ama sat down on one side of her, Dealine on the other one. Jiddy sat down by the skunk's side and a moment later the scent from inside Gelly's bag reached her nostrils when the girl handed out cakes for everyone.

They ate the golden brown, moist cakes. They were mostly sweet, but with the typically sour note of the bilberries whose dark blue, almost black juice had soaked the light, but greasy pastry.

"Lookie, lookie, isn't that Spane's ride?"

Jiddy's head spun around and she stared at the goat who was standing behind her. It was Camron, a grin upon his face. Behind him stood an otter Jiddy knew as well, Mawna.

Everybody was looking at the goat by now.

"You know..." he said casually towards Dealine and Ama. "...it's a pretty hot waitress you got yourself there."

The moment Camron had spoken to her, Jiddy's heart had quickened its pace. His sudden arrival had taken her by surprise and instantly her instincts had prepared her for a fight: Her tail lashed about, her eyes had narrowed, her claws had unsheathed. But she was still sitting besides Dealine. For the moment nothing but an instinctive snarl escaped her.

"...fooling around..." Camron mentioned while looking about as if nothing was happening. He looked at Dealine from the corner of his eyes. "Rather publicly, you know. Right, Mawna?" he asked the otter behind him.

The otter nodded.

"Actually right behind your café," the goat said towards Ama.

The marmot inhaled deeply. "Leave us alone!"

"Well, I just thought that it was important to you. I mean, you having the café and everybody knowing about it..." Camron added quickly.

Jiddy seemed to have shrunken all of a sudden, but beneath her clothes her muscles had tensed, contracting her small feline body to a bundle of tightened muscles.

"I really don't want to mention what she did there. I can't barely find words for that you know. And with whom. Who knows who's been involved...?"

"That's enough!" Dealine stated severely.

"Can you tell her what that girl did, Mawna?" Camron asked the otter behind him.

"No, really, I'd rather not. It's much too disgusting..." the otter replied.

"GET AWAY!" the marmot yelled suddenly. His usually calm voice had suddenly gotten much more powerful than ever before.

"I just wanted to warn you, you know," Camron said, smiling. "I mean, everybody knowing and your café..."

"NOW!" Ama yelled.

"Alright!" Camron shrugged his shoulders. "It's your shop, if it's no problem for you that she earns a little extra...! Let's go, Mawna!" The goat turned away and the two young males walked down the quay.

Dealine, Gelly and Ama looked after them.

When the skunk turned towards Jiddy, she noticed that the lynx girl was nothing but quivering. At first the skunk was convinced that the lynx was close to crying but then she realized that Jiddy's muscles were so tense that they poked out of the surrounding fur. Her dark brown hair covered most of her face, so that nothing but her muzzle was visible, her sharp teeth exposed and gritted. Her breath was nothing but a sharp hiss. "Are you alright?" Dealine asked cautiously.

"Hrch..." Jiddy was still quivering and with a powerful movement she jumped to her feet.

"Jiddy!" Dealine exclaimed.

But the lynx girl was already walking away, her ears laid back so that Dealine's words could not reach her.

"Jiddy?" Dealine cried after her.

But the lynx was already on her way, still tense, her tail lashing furiously.

"Dear Goddess!" Dealine sighed.

"What's with Jiddy, mum?" Gelly asked.

Dealine looked at her daughter and stroke her hair. "I hope she doesn't do anything foolish," Dealine mentioned rather to herself.

"She's mature enough. She just has to calm down," Ama replied.

Dealine looked up and their eyes met. "You really don't know her, do you?"

"I have faith in her," Ama answered. He was looking down, smiling lowly. "And I don't give a damn about any gossip." He looked at Dealine again. "She is a good waitress. More than that, actually."

For a moment they looked into each other's eyes.

Then Dealine quickly cast her eyes down., looking at the water beneath her feet.

Gelly looked from her to Ama and back to her mother.

She could hardly control herself. Her blood hammered inside her ears, her fingers twitched, claws randomly unsheathing.

She was neither aware of all the villagers around her, nor the houses all around. Somehow she found her way. Most of the people made way for her, when they did not, she simply jostled them aside, even those who were much bigger than her. The insults those people yelled after her did not reach her mind.

The lynx girl marched straight into the old warehouse.

The boys sat on a heap of old ropes, the thick, heavy kind that was used for the boats' anchors. They were talking lowly, obviously bored by the lack of activity. Some of them smoked. There was nothing to do for them until the fishermen returned with their boats. Most of them were otters, some beavers, the marten was almost standing out between them.

Spane was talking and suddenly everyone was breaking out with laughter.

Jiddy stood in the door, yet unnoticed by them. The light that came in through the door shone down on her.

One of the boys made a sign to Spane and the marten turned his head, finally noticing the lynx girl. He sighed and said something again. The other boys laughed while he stood up and walked towards Jiddy.

"What do you want?" he asked while he was walking closer. The light that came in from outside blinded him.

The lynx lowered her head, her dark brown hair covered most of her face.

"Damn!" The marten stopped at a few steps distance, he looked down for a moment, shortly jiggling his foot up and down. "Now, don't make a scene. I really can't stand that, you know," he said while rising his head, looking at her again. "I mean, what do you want anyway? What did you expect?" He waited for a reply but the only thing he saw was the small, quivering lynx girl. "Listen, I have no idea what's going on inside your head, but I never said anything about you being my... whatever! Actually I don't wanna have got anything to do with a slut like you!"

Her narrowed eyes glistened behind the strands of hair.

"Yeah, don't look at me like that!" He feigned laughter. "I mean... *you* actually seemed to enjoy it! Ha! You're such a nympho, jumping everyone all of the time and now you come here crying and..." He feigned laughter again.

She showed her gritted teeth. A snarl escaped her, it was so low that it was hardly audibly at all.

"Do you know what really surprised me? That you were actually able to do all that shit!" he mentioned.

The boys at the back of the warehouse were listening carefully.

"You really seemed to be plenty experienced. I wouldn't be surprised if you got this from..." He was not meant to finish that sentence. A moment before he was stopped, he had actually wondered where that strengthening, low growl came from.

Something between a snarl and a cry escaped her when Jiddy jumped forward, quick as lightning, all her tension breaking free in one sudden move. Her fist shot sideways and hit the marten's jaw with full power, tearing him off his feet.

His entire world exploded in an unexpected eruption of pain. For an instant everything went black, he did not even notice how he was pushed over, until he

hit the ground, pain shooting into his spine like a flaming spear. But he did not even have the time to cry out because the moment he hit the ground she was already above him again and started kicking. Her feet was rammed into his stomach, he writhed, instinctively tried to protect himself but all strength had already escaped his body, he bend in convulsions whenever her feet hit him once more, shot through his entrails. He whimpered.

Inarticulate hisses escaped her while she kicked the defenseless boy on the ground. She stopped for an instance as everything went round and round. She inhaled deeply and covered her eyes with her paw. She did not have to loose control right now. She inhaled once more and tried to remember what she did and why she did it and abruptly the anger rushed back and she kicked the moaning marten once more who whimpered in pain, held his stomach, blood, tears and snot running down his face.

Neither of them had noticed how the boys had jumped to their feet, the moment Jiddy had punched Spane for the first time. But now they ran towards them and when Jiddy noticed the movement she stumbled backwards, breathing heavily. Exhausted, panting, she looked at the boys with eyes that were nothing but slits in her face and pupils that we tiny rhombic spots in the dark. Jiddy trembled from teeth to toe, she could hardly stand straight, her entire body quivered with hardly restrained power that was about to go off at any moment.

The boys hesitated, keeping a certain distance from the girl despite having her outnumbered.

The lynx girl snarled at them, claws unsheathed, ready to pounce anyone who dared to come closer.

The marten rocked on the floor, his desperate sobbing echoed through the room. He tried to move, to get away from the mad lynx, to crawl as he was unable to get on his feet but he just uselessly slipped over the ground. He was nothing but a small heap of hurt flesh that was ravaged by pain he had never felt before and beyond the pain was the over-whelming fear of the feline that stood above him.

When she moved again, he screamed in panic and pulled together. But his scream was drowned out by her deafening cry she sent towards him and the gathered males. She screamed at the top of her lungs, a hoarse sound that did not end until her lungs started to ache because of the vacuum inside them. She inhaled and the sound of it mixed with a sob she was unable to hold back.

Jiddy ignored the the boy who doubled up with pain, each new sob shook his powerless body, sometimes a single howl escaped his throat. He could have been pitiful if she had had any pity left. She turned around and walked out of the warehouse, trying to fight the tears that gathered in her eyes.

Behind her the boys tried to help the hurt marten.

“You are going to pay for this, slut! You hear me? We will get you!”

She heard the male’s voice and she just did not care anymore.

Dealine opened the door to her small apartment, holding Gelly's hand when they stepped inside. The skunk noticed the lynx and started to smile instantly. "I hoped to meet you..." She stopped when she noticed how Jiddy violently stuffed her sleeping back into her backpack. "What are you doing?" the skunk asked in surprise.

Jiddy hesitated. "Fucked up big time," she mumbled. She spoke so lowly that Dealine could hardly hear her.

"What do you mean?" Dealine asked.

Gelly was confused, she looked at Jiddy and at her mother.

"If you mean the gossip, Ama and me really don't care. We..."

"No!" Jiddy interrupted her. Weakly she shook her head.

"Do you really have to go?" the older woman asked with concern.

"Shouldn't be here anymore..." she said lowly.

For the first time Gelly seemed to understand what was going on. The little girl's held her mother's paw much more tightly.

"I don't want to ask what happened between you but it can't be that serious, can it?" She eyed the lynx girl who was way to small for her age.

Carelessly Jiddy threw some clothes into her backpack. "Y' don't wanna know..."

Although she didn't understand Dealine nodded. "I'm sorry!" she said with honest sympathy.

The lynx paused for a moment, stood up straight and turned towards her host. Her features had lost their usual, angular severity. There was nothing but the expression of tiredness of a simple girl. Faintly she tried to smile. "It's me, my fault."

Dealine waved her hand. "At least I could have warned you..."

Jiddy just shook her head looked around on the floor if there was still something of her stuff lying around. Instead she met Gelly's begging eyes.

"Can I go with you?" the otter asked.

Jiddy blinked as she did not instantly realize what she had been asked, but then she chuckled weakly, a rarely seen expression on her face. "I'm sorry: No!" she answered as softly as she was able to.

"I promise to be nice," Gelly said and looked into the lynx girl's eyes with all of her natural cuteness and her filial affection to the older lynx.

Jiddy kneeled down and took the otter in her arms. The small girl hugged the lynx girl with all her strength and Jiddy held her tightly.

Dealine observed the two.

Gelly sobbed. "You can even be my sister if you want..." She begged but heavy tears already ran down her cheek.

"Sorry, Gelly. Sorry, I fucked up again," Jiddy whispered and rocked the crying girl in her arms, carefully she took hold of the small otter and lifted her up on her arm. She carried her over to her mother and gently gave her to Dealine who took her on her arm and held her tightly, trying to comfort her daughter. For a short time Jiddy was unable to take her eyes off Gelly, but then she gulped and went

over to her backpack to tie it up. With a single strong, powerful movement she closed the backpack and then shouldered the heavy weight.

She looked at Dealine who offered her an encouraging smile. "I'll come down with you," she said.

They left the small apartment, Jiddy carrying the heavy weight of her backpack and Dealine the burden of her daughter. Jiddy's tail wagged.

Finally they stood on the street,

The sun was already about to reach the edge of the canyon, announcing the evening.

The first cool wind swirled around them. The rushing water of the river echoed through the canyon.

"Greets to Ama! I'm sorry, I can't say good-bye to 'im," Jiddy explained.

Dealine smiled. "Certainly!" And she leaned forward and gave the surprised Jiddy a shy kiss on her furry cheek. "I would have been proud of a daughter like you," she said ironically although it did not sound funny at all.

"Please, don't go!" Gelly suddenly cried out and grabbed Jiddy's neck, crying even more desperate than before, her tears flowed down her otter muzzle and dropped down on Jiddy's fur.

Carefully Jiddy freed herself from Gelly's embrace and gently handed her over to her mother again. Jiddy hesitated for a moment. "Can y' do me a favor?" she asked the skunk.

Dealine nodded. "Anything."

"Please tell Ama t' go on. Just tell 'im that."

Dealine nodded. "I am sure he will!" she answered. "But there's something I want you to promise me!"

Jiddy looked up.

"Visit us! Promise to visit the three of us one day."

An awkward smile showed up on her face and Jiddy nodded and lowered her head. She inhaled powerfully before she raised it again. "OK, bye then! Thanks for everythin'."

"Thank you, Jiddy!" Dealine replied. "And good luck!"

Jiddy walked backwards, up the road to the end of the canyon. She saw how Dealine told something to her daughter who had still been crying in her arms and Gelly slowly rose her head and then waved her hand to the lynx girl while wiping her tears with the other one. Jiddy waved her hand too, then turned around and walked up the road out of this valley, away from the river, rubbing her eyes.

End of Chapter 13

Annotation 1: We would call that game *Cops and Robbers*.

Annotation 2: Like most kinds of cress, Red Cress has large beautiful blossoms. The name is due to the color of those.

Annotation 3: The Wenaussan Poem goes back to the Age of Dawn. Nobody knows for sure what is supposed to mean or even what kind of place Wenaussa has been. But it is a tradition that children recite it on their birthday. It is supposed to bring good luck.

Annotation 4: Sweets and specially prepared food are traditional birthday gifts for children.