

They call me the Warrior of Light. Today I cast a long shadow over the burning sands of occupied Ala Mhigo.

The sun is high in the cloudless sky, beating down on distant dunes and the engulfing din of battle alike. I stand at the forefront of the melee, weaving ambient aether as a one-woman vanguard in an effort to establish a bridgehead against the soldiers of the Garlean empire fighting to maintain control of their captured province. Great winds toss and harry their ranks with biting force and blinding grit. The earth itself trembles beneath their feet, disgorging stones the size of one's head that splinter armor and other things besides. Barriers of liquid blue surround me, halting incoming projectiles and depositing them with soft clatters at my feet. Healer though I am by training, there's more than one thing you can do with judicious application of nature's elemental bounty.

The battle surges and withdraws, ebbs and flows. In the space between those moments I cast my eyes to the sky in anticipation. She should be there soon. My apparent overextension is but a feint, a diversion from the subterfuge carried out by one key individual to enable our gathered forces to sweep forward at the appointed hour and grant no mercy to the occupying army. Soon enough, I see it—a speck on feathered wings bearing a rider and swooping between missiles sent skyward to bring it down. The pair alight atop a tower of height that sends my head spinning just to gaze upon and draped with a Garlean standard so large it would take a hurricane to make it flap. A tiny figure leaps off what can barely be recognized as a griffon and busies herself briefly with the contents of her saddlebags. Color ripples suddenly across the hanging banner, transforming it within moments to a colossal Ala Mhigan flag.

Chaos sweeps through the forces of Garlemald. One by one they look up to the new symbol with varying degrees of panic. Some fall back at the apparent capture of their fortification. Others continue their dogged advance. Some simply shout in confusion. Ranks divided, they make easy pickings for the grand alliance of the Ala Mhigan Resistance and neighboring city-states of Eorzea. Allied soldiers cut a grim swathe through the maelstrom and break the back of their resolve before order can be reinstated in the wake of the illusion. A general retreat is called, and one more Garlean stronghold is seized in truth by the Alliance.

A cheer goes up amongst the victorious, but I have eyes only for the duo detached from their lofty vantage and diving through the sky toward the forefront of our ranks. They land with the swoosh of beaten air and the clatter of wicked talons, and the rider wastes no time in dismounting and dashing in celebration toward the assembled soldiers.

You might not guess at first glance that M'naago was an officer of the

Resistance, and a high-ranking one at that. Girlish and energetic, she moves with the lithe agility typical of a miqo'te—a catgirl to some—human in all but the pointed ears atop her head, the tapered pupils of her brilliant orange eyes, the feline tail swishing out behind her. Her smooth skin is of a rich brown two shades past well-tanned, her reddish hair and tail fur bleached to a color nearly pink. She wears her hair in a style more punk than militaristic, slanted bangs falling to her jawline over one side of her face and a violently spiky ponytail sticking up in back. It's a striking mismatch with the warbow slung across her back and the drab utility of her uniform. Not that she doesn't wear it well, but the sum total is perhaps not the image that jumps immediately to mind of one well-versed in both combat and command, let alone the dangerous sorts of missions she takes upon herself in defiance of her status among the allied command. The memory of our first meeting rings crystal clear as I gaze upon her, of the supposed lowly messenger from across the border hardly waiting for me to stanch her bleeding before setting off again to slip past the Garlean patrols that nearly laid her low in her first passage.

The surging crowd parts around her now, a spring in her step and triumph on her face as she makes a beeline toward me. Full glad am I to see her hale and whole, to avoid a repeat of that day's concerns in the simmering prelude to liberation. Or worse.

"I did it!" she cries in her thickly-accented voice as she reaches me, jumping in her glee. "I thought maybe..." she continues, chest heaving with apparent adrenaline and exertion, "...but we pulled through!" Without another moment's hesitation she sweeps forward and pulls me into a tight hug.

My eyes widen and a little "oh!" escapes my lips. She's tall for a miqo'te, the perfect height for my chin to alight on her shoulder as she squeezes me against herself. I wrap my arms around her in reciprocation of her celebratory affection, and find myself clinging a little tighter than I'd anticipated.

"You were great too," she says close to my ear. In our spirited embrace the folds of her uniform are poor cover for what lies beneath. Transparent to my grasp, I can feel the strength and slenderness of her form, the soft press of her chest. A secret shared only to me. Her grip loosens momentarily as if to pull away, but I hold on a second longer. She gives me another squeeze as a different sort of cheer begins to sound around us, then steps back and regards me at arm's length.

I smile weakly. She smiles broadly.

Without another word she turns and darts away, and the assembled crowd surges forth to receive the two heroes of the day.

Some time later, an evening or an age, I stand in an open tent amongst rows of stretchers and firm beds. One of too many such enclaves dotted about the encampment, each thick with the clotted smell of blood and things that will sting a bit if you'd just hold still a moment, despite the occasional breeze filtering through. Even a great rout is never bloodless for the victorious.

Kneeling over a soldier more fortunate than some, I tap the aether of the giving land in a very different fashion than before. Water to comfort and soothe, wind to scour impurities from deep wounds, earth to grant strength and vigor to newly-knitted flesh. A sudden lightheadedness comes over me as I channel a portion of my own strength into my patient to back the ambient flows, and the tendril of my directed aether flags and splinters and disconnects in the middle. I blink and rub my eyes before weaving it again, dredging up the reserves of my conviction to prosecute this simple, mundane task. Mundane to some, at least, I remind myself at the result; the soldier sighs and sinks into his firm pillow, the corners of his grimace melting away as his breathing falls back into a steady rhythm.

I stand and wipe my brow and gaze down the rows laid out before me.

Before I can move on toward the next, a hand on my shoulder arrests me from behind and I turn to face the source.

"You've done enough here," M'naago says in a clear, authoritative voice. Her own eyes are bright, her expression focused yet energetic. A dual reflection of the weight of command she bears, the liveliness by which she fights just as dearly for the morale of all. "The surgeons can handle themselves for a while."

The words won't unstick from my tongue before she heads off my complaint.

"You're dining with command tonight. Even the Warrior of Light needs to be fed and watered once in a while. And they're requesting your counsel after."

"I've no head for strategy," I petition in return. "You all know that."

"And they all think it's better you know what you're pointed at before they—before we—loose you at it." Her expression softens a bit. "Besides, I didn't down the biggest gagana you've ever seen just for you to turn your nose up at it." I scan across her shoulder and notice several white-fledged arrows missing from the quiver slung across her back.

"I'll send for a plate when I'm finished," I try once more as my stomach growls in betrayal.

"That's an order, Meteora."

My feeble argument dies in its tracks. Unpretentious as we are in our companionship, she does outrank me here. It's... complicated. I'm an adventurer by trade, a hero by reputation, the Mothercrystal's chosen by calling. A weapon granted room enough to swing against the scheming and the shadowless for the good of all. But even if my rank in the grand company where I cut my teeth has become little more than ceremonial, I still sit below those who organize and strategize the day-to-day. I can't simply ignore my position in the chain of command while operating under their name. And as the second in the Resistance, M'naago's word is near enough to law in the effort to retake her homeland as makes no difference.

"Once we're done," she continues, "you're to report to the sauna tent outside the eastern encampment. I'll send word to your retainer if you've not got something to change into. You're going to relax a little, come hells or high water."

I pause at her request, at the pointedness of her consideration. I can't stop my mind from racing, imagining her imagining me in something even slimmer and tighter than my smallclothes. "I suppose that's also....?"

She nods. A reassuring smile creeps across her face, and warmth creeps into my cheeks.

"We meet in half a bell. Though I'll excuse you if you're fashionably late again." Her tone is conversational, nearly playful now despite the authority of her words. She nods again in acknowledgment of my acquiescence before dashing away once more, doubtless on some other urgent business about the camp. A peculiar feeling settles in my chest as I watch her departure, and I consider that there are some orders it's not so bad to obey.

That same evening, just as the scorching day begins its precipitous drop into the chill of desert night, I stand uncertainly before the threshold of the tent marked off for my attendance. I've got a towel wrapped around me and vanishingly little beneath, slim-cut skintight red clinging in contrast to the loose fluffy white above. The traditional colors of a white mage, of course. A breeze stirs, biting at my bare shoulders and venturing up my naked thighs. I shiver for a moment and then push into the interior and let the flap close swiftly in my wake.

A wall of thick steam assaults me, borderline scorching and thick in my nose and my lungs. Before me stretches a long, well-lit space with two low benches lining either side. An assortment of men and women occupy them, soldiers and merchants and camp followers mingling as equals, all wearing as little as I am under the scanty concealment of my towel and all thoroughly blasé about it. The

majority I recognize as native Ala Mhigans, but interspersed among them are the obvious inhabitants of the cooler climes of Eorzea. Some share the relaxed bearing of those experienced in the custom, while a few seem to share my curiosity and my uncertainty on what to make of it all. The entire tent buzzes with the indistinct hum of a dozen overlapping conversations, and the sharp signature of aetherial manipulation catches my senses as I stand unmoving in the entrance. Fire and water collide in practiced fashion by one with the training and the assignment to maintain the tent's thick atmosphere, and another cloud of hot vapor billows forth.

Just as I take my first halting step forward, one figure peels themselves from the masses and rises before me to wave enthusiastically in my direction.

"Over here, Meteora!" she calls. I feel more than a few pairs of eyes upon me, but the stark awareness of being so publicly laid bare is nothing compared to the jolt that runs through me at the sight that greets my own. M'naago is sprightly and exuberant in her beckoning, and dressed in nothing but a fantastically tiny bikini. Stretched tight and smooth over her shapely body, the brilliant pink fabric complements her faded strawberry hair and contrasts smooth ochre skin glistening with the sheen of clinging condensation. I can't help but stop and drink in the spectacle of a commanding officer so stripped down and vulnerable, the unabashed enthusiasm of her bearing, the excitement and attention she visits on me and me alone. For a blessing, I'm flushed to near glowing already from the swirling steam engulfing me.

I stare on, awestruck, as she crosses the length of the tent and takes me by the arm, drags me out of my reverie and guides me back to an open space along one bench wide enough for two to sit abreast. She reclaims her seat and I drop into the narrow space beside her, still clinging to my towel for a shred of modesty. Taking in the room from my new vantage, I see most of those arrayed along the benches fallen back already into their chatter or their silent repose, the arrival of the vaunted Warrior of Light in a towel and little else apparently but a small diversion from the greater import of their relaxation.

M'naago slides her arm around my bare shoulders, pulling my attention back and giving me a little squeeze. A gaggle of three miqo'te girls seated across from us chitter animatedly amongst themselves at the gesture, giggling together as I glance in their direction and giggling even louder at my obvious effort not to let my gaze linger. M'naago's grip reassures me, her thumb working at the join of my neck to unwind some small measure of the accumulated stress of the day's events.

"They've been wondering about me for a while," she says by way of cryptic

explanation, and doesn't let the implication linger in the air. "I specifically requested you relax, by the way," she chides, picking at the edges of the fluffy fabric girded about me. "It's not so bad once you dive in. Nobody's going to stare. One might, but I might say she has good taste."

I look toward her. Her expression is amused, almost mischievous.

Half-formed responses rise within my mind, but I can't doubt her and neither can I deny her. Her encouragement outweighs my trepidation in the balance of my consideration and I let my towel fall away, inviting in against my nearly-naked frame the full onrush of steam and the eyes of any observers, few or many as they might be. It feels... good. M'naago lets her arm drop, though she remains shoulder-to-shoulder with me as I lean back a bit, luxuriating in the thick heat enveloping me, searching out every ilm of my skin and permeating my very being. The most persistent grit and grime of battle is no match for that cleansing vapor, and all my private worries seem to flood out from my very pores. Even the dense atmosphere is downright pleasant to breathe once I get into the rhythm of it.

After some time, I issue a long sigh and let my eyes fall open. M'naago breaks her conversation with the bather to her right and turns toward me.

"What do you think?"

"It's nice," I say simply, and her expression brightens.

Nodding in assent, she introduces me to the girl she'd been conversing with. M'nezzha, another of M'naago's tribe and nearly as energetic in making my acquaintance. She's a spirited conversationalist and I'm glad to let her drag me along, sharing between the three of us the gossip and concerns of the mundane day-to-day, dreams for the future and a liberated Ala Mhigo. Time ticks away in blessed trivialities until I've had my fill and I lean back again, leaving them to continue their conversation apart from me except the omnipresent touch of M'naago's shoulder against my own.

To my left is a man of my own native Gridania, the lush Eorzean city-state just across the Ala Mhigan border. Marrus, he tells me, a name that tickles faintly in my mind but falls short of proper recognition. Seasoned but still hale, he must have been on the other side of full manhood in the tales he eagerly regales me with of his service in the conflict that resulted in the subjugation of Ala Mhigo a score of years ago. This too is a comfort, to fall back into discussion of matters less savory but all the more familiar for it with a kindred, stalwart soul. My own exploits in that realm are myriad as they are fantastical, but he accepts what bits I offer in return with a soldier's matter-of-fact credulity. It's no secret who I am, I suppose, though to my unspoken gratitude he makes no mention of it. Further

still, he fulfills M'naago's assurances by being utterly nonplussed at my state of dress, or lack thereof.

The evening wears on and the ranks of the assembled thin in search of the night's blessed rest. This new conversation flags and ebbs into silence, and I find it difficult to keep my eyes open. A familiar touch slides up my back, and I sit upright to the apparent amusement of the girls still situated across from us.

"I think it's time we took our leave," M'naago says gently. "Our quarters are prepared already."

I consider the implications of that statement with something a little more than simple relief.

"M'naago?" I venture in a low voice.

"Naago," she corrects me, and not for the first time. To drop the tribal indicator from a miqo'te name is a sign of kinship and familiarity. Not one I judge her undeserving of, for all our history in both the fomenting and the unfolding of our current campaign, nor so intimate as to invite raised eyebrows at such a display, but an informality I've found difficult to attach to someone of such status and importance. Still, this is hardly the time or place to go against her word.

"Naago," I repeat, "I... thanks."

She gives my shoulder another squeeze before rising and taking me by the hand, pulling me up and toward our nocturnal repose.

Our accommodations lay on the outskirts of the encampment, secluded from the bustle and the noise of the greater cluster of temporary habitations. We push together under the moonlight into a circular tent, more spacious than that of a common soldier's but by no means large, our personal effects stowed with the neat efficiency of our allied Lominsan seafarers and a fire burning merrily in a pit situated at the center. Two rectangular patches of deeply-piled furs lay on either side, set across the central firepit from each other. Naago makes her way toward one and flops onto it with rather more abandon than I'd expect. I pick the one opposite and lay myself down somewhat more gently.

I'm no stranger to privation when it comes to eking out a night's hard-fought rest. And for all Naago's done, I suspect she'd give anything softer than a stretch of bare rock a passing grade. The plush depths that embrace me now are far beyond what I'd hoped from the faint praise of Naago's enthusiastic approval. Something to sink into, not to simply lay upon. I unfold myself on my mattress of sorts and watch as Naago does the same, exposing herself to the radiant heat to bake the clinging moisture off her body.

I can do one better. A strand of fire-aspected aether—not my specialty, but something I'm hardly a novice at manipulating—spools in my palm as a translucent red thread. I draw on wind as well, lacing both together and melding their properties as one. This combined magic I loose upon myself, blowing my hair back in a wash of hot air that wicks away the deep-rooted dampness in short order. Satisfied, I fan out the simmering jet and redirect it down my body, sending it snaking over my skin in thin waves that massage and tickle and scour the residual wetness from it.

"That looks useful," Naago says close enough to nearly make me jump. So preoccupied was I with my little cantrip that I hadn't noticed her making her way over. I certainly notice her now. She sets herself down to lie roughly at arm's length upon my own island of soft furs and stretches out before me in that tight little bikini, the light of the fire kindling her pinkish hair to a warm radiance and enlivening the droplets of moisture still beaded over her smooth, slender frame. Her coy smile and those piercing orange eyes top it all off, elevating the sight from delightful to undeniably alluring.

"Why don't you practice it some more?"

It is by no means a complicated task under normal conditions. But meeting her expectant gaze... My heartbeat quickens as I gather more aether, falling back on my training and recitation of the theory engraved within my mind to avoid misstep. Soon enough, a growing mass of energy in the proper proportions gathers at my fingertips, ready to loose with a mental command.

The first part isn't so difficult. I tousle her hair with a jet of arid heat until it lightens to its normal dry brightness and move downward to caress her cheeks and neck with its warmth. Her bare shoulders give me pause in anticipation of what comes next. The technique I'm using is lean, efficient. A sheet of rushing wind perhaps an eighth of an ilm thick. Which means... contouring it. She bites her lip as I cup her breasts with my close-hewn aetherial breeze, squirms a little and lets out a sharp exhalation as I make it past those twin milestones and tickle her bare midriff. I pause when I reach her hips, circling over them for what seems an age. But I work up the nerve to take the plunge before she can offer further encouragement and continue downward, sending the silky breeze rushing right through the scant fabric of her bikini bottom and all that's scarcely hidden beneath. A breathy giggle rewards me and I'm as flushed as I was under the recent caress of scalding steam as I wrap the flows around her muscular thighs, brush out her tail with fingers of warm magic, continue over her well-shaped calves until at last I clear her curling toes.

Naago sighs in satisfaction, tail flicking idly behind her, watching wordlessly

with an expectant expression. A moment passes between us.

"You look cold," she says, breaking the brief silence.

Words spring unbidden to my lips while my mind works toward a very different conclusion. "Actually, it's kinda..."

She rolls her eyes, amusement on her face as she gives something between a scoff and a laugh, then rises agilely to her feet to stride out of my field of view. A second later, a weight drops onto the soft bedding behind me.

A strong, smooth arm slides around my stomach and reels me in until my whole body lays tight against hers.

"How about now?"

She gives me another squeeze before her fingers begin to wander, sliding down my bare midriff, circling my navel, teasing downward to brush the bowed line of my bikini between my hips and rub her way back up along my side. My heart hammers and my thighs twitch at the attention, that all-too-welcome invasion. So many battles I've fought, so many foes vanquished, so many times I've turned away claw and spear and searing bolt cast with mortal desperation to find the barest purchase on my flesh. To be trespassed upon now so casually, so fully and so delicately, ignites a flame in my chest and somewhere else besides. I revel in the tenderness of her touch, the boldness of her exploration, the authority and audacity by which she prosecutes an intimate campaign she knows won't be rebuffed. This time, I have no trouble falling in line.

"That's... better," I reply in a voice barely above a whisper.

Humming her assent, she wraps both arms around me and draws me in even more snugly. She's far too soft for someone of her martial skill and training, of strength far outmatching my own. The feeling of her nearly-naked form against my back is a magic I could never hope to weave in a thousand years of studying, the firmness of her hold on me just as marvelous as the ever-restless fingertips probing softly at ties of my bikini bottom and the knuckles rolling down my thigh. I'm acutely aware her ample breasts squishing into me in their skintight confines, the gentle press of her hips against my rear, the constant contact of her bare midsection in between. I settle back into a shoulder conditioned for the use of a stout yew warbow as she continues massaging me, working her way idly up and down, up and down, then presses her fingers into my ribcage just below one breast.

"You're supposed to be relaxing," she teases at the rapid fluttering beneath her touch. And works to make it so.

I wriggle and sigh in her soothing embrace, but dawning revelation quickens

my pulse once more. Perhaps it's obvious, or a little more. Perhaps I've simply spent too long as a tool who walks and breathes to allow myself the thought, let alone truly believe it. But the responses to my contented stirring are undeniable—the catching of her breath, the quiet satisfaction in her throat, the fond little extra squeezes. Far past time I realize that Naago offering up her own body to my comfort and my pleasure is no obligation, no sacrifice. No volunteering of her services to keep the Weapon of Light well-honed just as she wagers the sanctity of her self in forays behind enemy lines. That she seeks as fervently as I do the press of skin on skin, the hums and sighs traded softly in our embrace, the feeling of me squirming and snuggling in gentle captivity against her. The simple truth that she's as delighted to hold me as I am to be held. And, hope against hope, that she might desire... more.

Another tenacious wave of trepidation washes through me, but I ask myself if she might suffer her own yearning to wither in uncertainty in my place. I twist and turn within her grasp and roll around to meet her face-to-face. Nervously I meet her eyes, and reassuringly she meets my own. She pulls me in again to savor the greater intimacy of midriff against midriff, breast against scarcely-covered breast. Hip against quivering hip. I slide my arm around her and we share our heartbeats, quickening in the local resonance of our selves. She runs her fingers through my hair as I explore the muscles of her slender back, her gaze capturing mine, the flame within my chest blazing to a brilliance at the blush rising beneath the darkness of her cheeks.

Before I even realize it we're nose-to-nose and drawing ever closer. The depth of her gaze draws me inward, her half-parted lips a silent request. Heart leaping, I oblige our shared fantasy and meet her in a deep, passionate kiss.

Her trademark energy and anima flood through that blissful conduit, tender and torrential. I volley back in kind, stoking my own ardor with the spiritedness of her response. All pretenses between us crumble away, and reservoirs of pent-up longing burst through dams of propriety. One silky thigh slides between my own, pressing upward until a muffled moan rises in my throat. She continues surveying my every limb with her touch, her wandering hands knowing no boundaries and no shame. We feed each other, lifting our passions to new heights, carving out a moment out of unmitigated warmth and affection, and then another, and another.

It's some time before we break away, chests heaving as if we've run a marathon, giggling and humming with triumphant shared vibration. She smiles broadly, and glory rises bright within me. I dive back in and burrow deep into her, and know without the slimmest shadow of doubt that she's more than happy to receive me.

It seems an age since I've been able to forget the world, to truly lose myself in relaxation and comfort. She doles out both enough to renumerate the balance on those uncertain, trying days. With a smooth movement she reaches out and pulls soft furs over our entwined forms to cocoon us both together. She adjusts herself a little, just enough to lay my head against her shoulder and keep me securely there. We converse without words, her satisfaction at holding me in her arms made evident and answered by my own stirring appreciation unmasked and unrestrained. Fatigue creeps over me as we cuddle, the unshouldering of a world's accumulated concerns. Even if only for a time. For just one blessed night. The excitement and the thrill of our affections still pulse through me, but greatest and most gratifying of all is the promise of safety and security for a night's deep, uninterrupted rest. I press myself into the warmth and softness of her form and she sings me a lullaby with the melody of fingertips sliding from shoulder to hip, the refrain of knuckles massaging deep along my spine, the chorus of gentle breathing instructing me to fall in tune. Relaxation falls over our twin silence and together we drift off into a peaceful slumber.

Sometime in the wee hours I snap awake. The space is still and calm as it has been; no sudden noise or disruption meets my senses. But the desire for sleep drains from me all the same. Perhaps I'm just not used to such succor and surety. Or perhaps there's something else driving me. Either way, the weight of Naago's arm draped across my back is an anchor to reality. A reminder that this, somehow, is no mere bout of lucid dreaming. That I truly lay within her grasp. The air inside the tent is pleasantly cool now, the fire down to smoldering coals, the furs heaped about us all the more inviting for it. Yet something deep within refuses to let me rest. I peel back the piled covers, push myself free of Naago's reach. She sleeps on despite the chill I've invited against her, stretched out gloriously before me, slender and smooth, the gentle rise and fall of her chest driving the frantic hammering of my own heart.

Slowly, unsteadily, I reach out, power gathering in my palm. I know I shouldn't, and for that reason I can't help myself. Wind-aspected aether gathers in filaments like green smoke that spool together into tendrils the width of my finger, barely a quarter-ilm in diameter. Just a trickle, just the tiniest wisp compared to my full capabilities. Just a little test, I tell myself. Cheeks burning, I will the mass toward Naago's peaceful sleeping form. The writhing tendrils curl around her midriff, skimming over her skin so lightly as to elicit no response. My last chance to pull back. But compulsion drives me onward. They move upward under my careful direction, swirling around her ribcage, twining over her curves like climbing vines before combining and pushing in between her velvet lips.

Her chest rises in its rhythm and doesn't quite fall all the way back down. I curate and corral the aether feeding into her so that her breasts round out in their scanty confinement, expanding with coursing energy. It's a subtle accentuation to her shape, one she might even credit to her own imagination. But there's no hiding the truth from myself, no ignoring the twist of pleasure and guilt that courses through me. No reversing course now.

Emboldened by my success, or merely swept along by ascendant passion, I weave another strand of aether and send it forth in kind. This time it splits, twin fingers caressing her in opposition before arcing out and plunging back directly toward the apex of each breast, flowing through her bikini like it's not even there. Her breath catches momentarily and her nipples strain against her top, two dark, perky points that grow ever more pronounced, ever more enticing. The swell of her body is unmistakable now, impossible to deny. A siren song bidding me to dash myself to pieces.

Perfection already slumbers before me, I tell myself, my sins not yet beyond redemption, but in my fascination I can't help reaching for more. An idea takes root, a trespass most audacious of them all. My next aetheric probe kisses her slender abdomen and ventures downward to her hips. Even now the notion gives me pause, but that can't stay my hand for long. The snaking tendril descends gradually, checked by my last shred of trepidation, until at last my flaring desires win free and it shoots sharply forward to dive beneath the hem of her bikini bottom. A second later, I'm granted my reward: Naago sighs and rubs her legs together as tight pink fabric stretches fractionally tighter and smooth dark skin curves gently out.

I'm not sure when or if I'll be able to stop. I feed her by degrees, as if to succumb to and deny my indiscretions all at once. The sight is absolutely mesmerizing, her naked thighs pushing out against each other, her chest rising as if she's drawing in uninterrupted breath. My heart races and my gaze rakes up and down her muscled midriff, desperate to draw in everything at once. My focus wanders, my desires surge. A knotted mass of aether bursts forth from my palm, disrupting my careful flow and sinking into her before I can pull it back. Her stomach bulges with its untamed mass, curving slightly outward with a deep muffled whoosh.

She groans and stirs and yawns and turns, blinking, up to me.

The cherry-bright remnants of our fire would be ice against my cheeks. There's no hiding what I've done. Wordlessly she looks down at herself, rolls onto her back, presents a fresh vantage to her magnificent new curves as she traces a finger over her body. I watch, enraptured, envying that point of contact as she

examines my additions and turns her attention back up to me.

"Did you... do this?" Her expression is unreadable, accented voice barely above a whisper, the reflection of dying embers enlivened to leaping pyres in her eyes.

I can only manage the barest nod in response.

"Why," she says, a blade of ice spearing through my heart, "did you stop?"

I kneel unmoving in my disbelief. "What? You're not...?"

A smile blooms across her face. "Only that you didn't wake me sooner."

I have no further response but to stare, drinking in the view, imagination soaring alone above a violent tangle of emotion. She arches her back and stretches in obvious invitation, skin pulling slightly tighter than before in the contortions of her still-slender body as she looks me up and down. Her expression turns competitive, challenging, a not-so-hidden hunger running beneath.

"Fill me up as much as you dare." She giggles at the indignity she invites upon herself, divining the depths of my imagination and driving me on to fulfill them.

"That's an order."

I discover that my cheeks can go even hotter. There has never been a command I've been so compelled to obey.

Translucent green aether gathers in my palm now and she regards it intently, perhaps pondering my display of inadvertent overabundance, and anticipation rushes through me at our shared knowledge of how exactly I intend to employ it. I send a twist of flame behind me, enlivening our fire back to its original merry height and casting out every edge of shadow that might obscure the slightest detail, then stabilize the flow of wind and send it toward her, watching her mark its progress toward her half-parted lips.

Naago drinks it readily in, inspiring awe and delight within me at the eager debasement of her perfect body. She seems to revel in the feeling of it spreading out inside her, backing her growing curves with a gentle ramping pressure. Free from the shackles of secrecy, I thicken the tendril feeding into her so that she swells more swiftly, rounding out visibly in contrast to her former creeping progress. The situation is nearly as absurd as it is captivating, filling her body with flowing wind so that she expands with it, stretches with it, a magical potential far beyond her typical spirited vitality swirling just beneath the surface. She squirms and sighs and hugs herself as she grows, and I know we both can't wait to see more.

I prune the current, leaving her humming happily in its wake, and divert it into a new offshoot that ascends rapidly to loom above her chest. She watches it split under my guidance, forking into two identical copies that spin and sharpen as they hang in the air before diving suddenly downward, driving out a short, sharp cry of surprise and mingled glee as the twin translucent lances stream directly into her breasts. She rolls her head back, lets out a jagged breath, reaches out to watch the verdant inflow curl around her fingers on its way to squeeze into her in a manner that can only tickle viciously and then some. Her unnaturally perky assets enlarge and round out at a pace I could swear produces a faint rubbery creaking, the full force of the deluge that sent her entire body billowing now concentrated in those glorious mounds. I can see her nipples spearing outward at their summits, testing the resilience of her top as she grows to a size that would fill my grasp from fingertip to fingertip, and then double that, then triple.

Again I break off the emerald stream before she can reach the full of my envisioned transformation, leaving her gasping against scanty pink confines for which skintight feels an understatement. But she doesn't seem dissatisfied in the slightest. On the contrary, her orange eyes peek out eagerly from behind her slanted bangs, her thighs slightly spread in invitation. Even in her current state she manages to put me on the back foot, teasing me for the indignities I subject her to, her wordless commands louder even than the roaring compulsion in my mind. I can't deny the prize she promises herself, or the privilege of delivering it.

An artificial breeze springs to life within my gasp once more. Fresh and ferocious, it outmatches all my previous efforts together, the implication reflected clearly in the keen glint of Naago's gaze. It surges forth as twin stout ropes that seize her calves and spiral upward, climbing toward their target in tight, caressing coils. They wind around her pumping thighs and linger there, tickling and massaging, stoking her impatience before finally indulging our shared anticipation and plunging home in between.

Naago moans high and sharp, arches her back and bites her lip as she swells with new rapidity from the surging tsunami rushing into that most intimate of entrances. My own energy fills her, permeates her until she's brimming with it from head to toe, forcing her to expand with its gentle, irresistible power. Her stretching skin is smooth and taut and lustrous in the firelight, rising in time with the thrill of inflating her with wind-aspected aether, the glowing satisfaction of eliciting such ecstasy, the fulfillment of fantasies driving each other to new heights. Her belly billows out until she looks deeply pregnant and doesn't stop there, broadening as it rises to a shape more than halfway spherical. Her thickening thighs bulge delightfully, her widening hips threaten the integrity of

her bikini bottom, her breasts curve out disproportionate even to the grandness of her figure, pushing their fabric prisons to the absolute edge of failing.

It's some time before I can do anything but feed ever more aether into her, watching her progress with single-minded rapture. She kicks and clenches as she rounds and puffs out, squirming and gasping under the method and the measure of my ministrations. Her marvelous strength channels this defilement of her body's temple into graceful, somehow dignified curves, transforming her perfect figure into something even more admirable than her normal svelte self, but for quite different reasons that only heighten her appeal in comparison.

At long last I sever the flow to grant us both reprieve, to examine my handiwork in greater detail. To draw out our journey toward that tantalizing horizon, though I doubt she's nearing any sort of limit. She sighs, long and deep and satisfied, and I kneel before her, breathing as if I were the one subject to such titillatingly thorough testing of my body. I take in every ample ilm of her as she splays herself before me without shame or hesitation. The smooth, soaring peaks of her form, the rapid rise and fall of her chest, the little patch of darker pink at the crux of her magnificent thighs. She sees me staring unabashed, seems not just to allow it but to revel in it. Stretching herself out before me, she returns my hungry gaze with a grin of challenge and invitation.

"Take me if you can, O warrior."

I reach out and skim my fingertips over a surface firm with pressure but with a give and softness beneath that suggests far greater ultimate capacity. She directs my touch, taking me on a tour with no destination forbidden. Emboldened, I bring both hands to bear in seeking out the greatest heights and deepest valleys of her distended frame. I tickle her sides, circle her breasts, rub my thumbs around the points of her nipples as she writhes and giggles in response. Up and down I stroke curves smooth and rounded and soft that take an age to circumnavigate. She lays back, reciprocating the enjoyment of my exploration, inviting me onward, bidding me in ever closer. Then, swift and sudden as an arrow from her longbow, mischief glints behind her peek-a-boo bangs and she seizes my arm and hurls me down beside her.

Round and puffed-up though she is, she's still a seasoned hunter and an acutely capable combatant. She overpowers me easily, pinning me into the luxurious furs with the bulk of her pumped-up body. Arms lifted and spread above my head, I can only wriggle ineffectually against her hold, against the press of contours shaped by the battle of her own weight against the pressurized rigidity of her augmented curves. She smiles at her victory and leans in over me, lips hovering in offer. A kiss and something more, I know, but she pretends to hide

her intentions, her expression coy but with an undercurrent of amusement she can't conceal. She bids me to accept her innocent seduction, dares me to give in to her predatory allure. To surrender to what she has in store. As if I could ever refuse it.

The distance between us closes and I seal my own fate with in a deep, passionate kiss. She prosecutes it as before, tender as she is intense, but this time there's an extra vibrancy to it, a triumphant glee at pulling me into a trap she knows I can't escape. My warning comes as the further expansion of her chest, an extra inhalation she doesn't really need. Then she flexes her muscled midriff and blows it all into me.

My cheeks bulge against the deluge in my brief, ill-fated resistance. I can't hold it back. She pours it into me unrelenting, hot and slick and voluminous, and I drink it every bit of it despite my deliciously futile efforts. I revel in my defeat at her hands, of the seeds of my own destruction I've sown in the endless supply of wind sequestered within her now bursting free in reprisal. My slender frame balloons rapidly beneath her, lifting her up on its swell. Larger and larger, rounder and tighter I grow, well on my way to match the greatest extent of her former size. She doesn't stop or slow. Doesn't let up a single instant. Doesn't break the flow between us for all my captivated thrashing. To be so utterly dominated by a girl so cute and capable and charming is a thrill almost beyond description. Being forcibly filled with her swirling breath, feeling it building in my breasts and belly and thighs, tickling and massaging everywhere beneath my skin as I stretch helplessly around it. It's a novel indulgence, as one who has spent so long with the weight of the world hanging on my martial success, to simply give up and give in to her pleasurable assault. Transgressive in the most titillating way.

Naago pushes on, emboldened by every moan and groan, by the rushing air echoing inside my billowing body. I'm a little shorter than her, a little slighter and far less robust in my build. It takes a considerably smaller quantity of air to make me bulge with commensurate tightness and intensity as she did. I match and then exceed the maximum of her growth before she's even finished delivering her payload, but the memory of her promised capacity stirs a competitive hunger within me, the notion of depleting her finite reserves an ache in my pounding heart. A ribbon of aether springs from my fingertips, arcing above our entangled forms and then back down again to spear into her from behind. She moans sharply, squeezing my rounded bulk with her naked thighs, and I feel her shapely body begin to round out again.

We make a game of it. A competition to pump each other up faster than we can be filled in turn. She teases and toys with me, letting herself curve out to ever-greater proportions before discharging it all through my lips in sudden bursts

of gratifying pressure. I volley back between her advances, attempting to wrest control, though in truth it's no real contest at all. She takes blows me up against my greatest efforts until I creak faintly with the effort of holding it all in, until a trill of tightness ripples over the apex of my belly, until the ties of my bikini top loosen suddenly across my back. The tendril of aether flags and sublimates away in my capitulation, and she packs every last bit of lingering air into me before pulling back to gaze down at her handiwork.

Her normal lithe self looms over me, the imprints of her hands and knees shallow against the tautness of my form. My breasts jut free and exposed with the loss of my top, twin peaks that command special attention in her survey. I'm positively dizzy with giddiness and strain, gasping and quivering and groaning my delight, but I know she has so much more in store. She lifts a hand and dusts the hypersensitive tip of one nipple with her fingertip, sending a shiver through me from head to toe, before leaning in and sealing her mouth around it. My eyes roll back as she suckles, tracing out a wicked wheel with the tip of her tongue and drawing out a cry of ecstatic glee before reversing course and blowing hard.

An even greater jolt of rapture rips through me at the novelty and intensity of it. Once, twice, thrice I blossom from her focused exhalation, from the thin jet working its way in with a penetrating massage unlike anything I've ever known. Then she pulls back briefly and attacks my other breast in turn, evening out my growth and granting blessed symmetry in her attentions.

That done, she pushes herself away, staring fondly down at me and granting momentary reprieve to feel her skin against my skin, the grip of her thighs around me, the tender stroking of her fingers. But she was never one to sit idly. Slowly, a smile blooms across her face. A twinkle in her eye that stirs new anticipation in me, a swishing of her fluffy tail behind her shoulder. She gives me one last meaningful look and slides down to disappear over the horizon of my tight-packed stomach.

The soft sensation of her velvet lips graces my distended midriff, accompanied by the gentle wash of her breathing. She meanders over the vast expanse, kissing here and tickling there, kindling my desire and stoking it to a blaze with slow movements trending downward, ever downward. Her fingers caress my drum-tight thighs as she plants one kiss between my hips, and then another further down, and even further. Tantalizingly, agonizingly close. I'm shocked and delighted by how low she can go before meeting the fabric red as Dalamud stretched taut over the very last shred of my modesty. She hooks a finger in the hem of my bikini bottom and tugs playfully at it, an amusement and a promise. Bringing both hands to bear in answer to my gasp of impatience, she slides them out farther than I ever would have imagined to reach the ties still

straining at my sides, then digs her thumbs beneath the tortured knots and tugs them sharply outward. The overstretched fabric practically bursts off my body, leaving me fully, helplessly exposed. She strokes idly around her final prize, near enough to make me tremble and far enough to leave my ultimate end unrequited. I hear her giggle loudly, know she's leaning in at last to—

I bite back a scream that would wake the entire camp as her soft lips claim me and ecstasy tears through my stoked-up senses like jagged bolts of levin. She's as relentless with the tenderness of her touch, the motion of her hot tongue, as she ever was in pinning me down and pumping me up with her sweet breath. I squirm and squeal in the utter helplessness of my overinflated state, but she's inescapable in denying me the peaceful afterglow of sweet release. She keeps my rekindled pleasure alive, feeding that scarlet flame with the slick rubbing of her contact spiced with the muffled sounds of her own enjoyment. Eagerly, impossibly, she builds me up toward something even greater.

I hear her inhale sharply.

An explosion of sensation detonates within me as she wraps her arms around my thighs and blows with all her might between them. My breath catches, my vision swims, my skin sings with the strain of withstanding her aerial blast. It feels as if I might burst right then and there from the sheer intensity of it, but Naago continues on heedless of that peril, ramping up her assault and using the strength of her lungs unaided to pump me up without a shred of mercy. I can only lay back and shudder at the forceful invasion of her breath, the seductive tease of my creaking body, the implication of what she might accomplish if only she willed it. I roll my head back, grasp thick fur between my fingers, grind my hips against the open air against the ever-greater deluge flooding into me. My muscles clench against the ramping pressure, my moans growing higher and more frantic as the submissive glory of serving as the object of her unmitigated affection overwhelms me. Of being so utterly filled by her, filled beyond my wildest dreams and yet so desperate for more, filled until I can't take it any more. I can feel the onrushing conclusion, know I can do absolutely nothing to stop it. The rubbery keening of my own stretching skin backs the rising crescendo of my cries as she pushes me past the point of no return and keeps on going, as white-hot climax bursts between my legs at last in a radiant finale that erases all in its wake.

And still Naago doesn't let me rest. She continues visiting her attention upon me until my sharpening moans peak again, and then again, driving onward with that same passion and force beyond my wildest imaginings. The thrill of my surrender soars on waves of delicious shame as she exploits my deepest, most tender weakness for this most humiliating of all defeats. It's all I can do to ride it

out until she lets me descend from those lofty peaks, until her licking and kissing escort me back down to where my shrieks of ecstasy fade to a final chorus of gentle groans. At long last she rises from her encampment to lean against my colossal bulk, venturing forth to stroke and tickle breasts that jut out past the limits of my reach and belly swollen to a height that obscures half my vision. She meets my eyes and smiles brightly, then bites her lip with that all-too-familiar expression that serves as prelude to one concluding bit of mischief. She hops lightly to her feet and strides around to straddle me, knees close about my ears and her body looming in between.

Wordlessly she pulls at the ties of her bikini bottom like the bow on a gift-wrapped present. It falls away and she splays her thighs in command, lowering herself toward my impatient lips.