

Wild West: Cowgirls versus Azteks

Written for the 'Have Buns, Will Travel' contest

By Stravix

This is my first attempt at several things. Ass expansion, romance, and the western genre. The idea was a crazy one, but it was fun to write, so I hope it will be fun to read. Feedback is appreciated.

Juniper stood outside the sheriff's office with her arms folded for what seemed like forever. She had already stormed into the place and had words with the local deputies. Money had exchanged hands, and yet she was still standing out in the hot sun, alone.

"Pete's sake, what's the holdup?" she muttered.

The reason soon became apparent when she heard shouting emanate from within the building. A familiar high-pitched squeal followed by harsh, deep bellows told her all she needed to know. She took a step towards the door, but was surprised when it slammed outward by the force of a worn boot. Several men soon squeezed their way out while carrying a short mass covered in long brown curly hair.

Abigail, looking much like a trussed-up hog, kicked and squirmed as she was hauled over. "Bastards! Thieves! Scoundrels!" she screamed, before her eyes fell on Juniper. "Oh, hey Juni!"

The lead man, a grizzled and now sweaty man whose badge indicated he was the sheriff, stomped over to Juniper and shoved his face uncomfortably close. She fought the urge to back up when he opened his mouth and the smell of cheap booze impacted her senses. "You didn't pay us enough to unchain this animal. Bitch almost bit my thumb off!" he hissed. He shoved a newly bandaged hand into her view.

Juniper maintained a practiced, calm expression on her face. "I paid exactly what you asked. If you are saying you want to add medical fees on top then maybe *I* should add some expenses myself," she replied, reaching up to casually brush her blonde hair back behind her.

The man bristled. "Oh, City-slicker talks *big*. But you listen here..."

"They refused to give me back my property!" Abigail shouted before the man could elaborate any further, still suspended by her hands and ankles. "Matter of fact, the prick holding my boots is still wearing it!"

The sheriff whirled. "Shut yer trap!"

"Common thievery?" Juniper stepped around the sheriff and approached the group. "My, my... I'm sure the local judge would be very interested in hearing how the sheriff's office is staffed by a bunch of thieves."

He let out a laugh. "You think that old fox is gonna listen to some fresh-off-the-train tramp like you?"

It was Juniper's turn to laugh. "Oh, I'm sure he'll be very receptive if I mention my family name, Callahan. Of 'Callahan Freight and Carriage'. Though, I'd forgive you if you don't know it, seeing as you look like you have never stepped *on* a train... or a bath."

The man's face scrunched up in a mix of astonishment and barely contained rage. Juniper merely watched him calmly with her hands on her hips.

He seemed to wrestle with words in his mouth before he spat on the ground next to her and grunted. “Will be no need for that... Ms. Callahan.” He faced the man and jerked his head. The deputy looked sullen as he took off the weathered brown cowboy hat and tossed it at Juniper’s feet, soon followed by Abigail herself.

As the men stalked back into the office, the Sheriff jabbed a bandaged finger at Abigail. “We catch you stirring up trouble again and mark my words I’ll feed your fingers to the hogs, got it!” he spat again before stomping back into the building.

In the silence that followed, Abigail picked up her hat and rose to her feet. Dusting herself off. “The law has got a bit feral in recent years don’t you think?”

“You aren’t wrong, but when you said you needed something from the city office I didn’t expect to be retrieving you from the city jail,” Juniper let out a sigh. “I heard the story, so why did you rob him?”

“I didn’t rob anything!” Abigail snorted. “I went in to the City Office, all prim-like, and requested access to the town’s historical records. Polite as can be!”

Juniper nodded before moving into a walk, eager to be away in case the sheriff decided to change his mind. “Mhm, so at what point did the clerk have a sharp quill jabbing into his neck while a certain, ‘prim’ young lady rummaged through the documents.”

Abigail shrugged. “Well, he refused. Said I had no business with them. I said I just wanted a look, and wouldn’t lay a finger on them if he helped me. He refused again, but threw in a choice word about my parentage on top of it. Soo...”

“So, what was so important? You’ve been cooking something behind my back and now I’m getting curious. You know if my family gets word of this...”

“Not like their opinion of me can get any lower,” Abigail scoffed. “Does your Pappy still think I ‘abducted’ you?”

“Course he does. But he just doesn’t see your qualities, Abi.” Juniper replied as they rounded a corner. “You’re hard working, loyal, quick-thinking, great with horses...”

“A rail-thin runt of a girl, mud-blood, with no penny to her name, and several times jailed over misdemeanours. It’s no small wonder they don’t see squat, Juni.” Abigail sighed. “I’m as valuable as a wild horse with two legs.”

Juniper cut off Abigail’s walk and stood firmly in front of her. “I told you to quit that kind of talk, didn’t I?” She reached down and brushed some dirt off the woman’s shoulder. “I won’t hear it from the woman who swept me off my feet and opened my eyes to the world outside.”

Abigail let out a chuckle. “I still remember the look on your mother’s face when you announced you’d be leaving with the riding instructors assistant.” The laughter left her face a moment later. “Kinda wish it was a smile and not a look like she sat on a viper.”

“My family may not approve, but it won’t matter. I’m the only daughter they have, and they are far too old now to make another heir.” Juniper laid a hand on the smaller woman’s shoulder and gave it a reassuring squeeze. “I love you, and you know that.”

“I *know* what you think of me, Juniper. And it means the world to me, but...” Abigail plucked off her hand and cupped it to her chest. “But I *want* their approval. I want to walk alongside you in those fancy gatherings with my head high. And to do that I need money and clout. And you know when I want something...”

Juniper looked down at her partner to be. She felt her heart flutter at the unbreakable spirit of the little woman. “...You bite in and don’t let go.”

“Damn straight!” Abigail said as she took off her hat and started fiddling with it. The tough leather gave way as her fingers slipped into a tiny cut in the material. “Which brings us back to why I scrapped with that clerk!”

Juniper sensed what was approaching. “So you did rob something,” she let out an exasperated sigh as a piece of parchment emerged from the hat. Having all the wrinkled signs of been shoved into it in a hurry.

“Not robbed, borrowed!” Abigail laughed gaily as she held the crumpled piece of paper like it was deed to a thousand acres. “Stashed it in there before the Sheriff’s goons trussed me up.”

Juniper decided to let it go and watch with interest as the paper was unfurled. It was an aged map of what appeared to be railroad tracks and mining sites. The reason was lost on her. “A map? You got arrested over a mining map? Are we going digging?”

“In a manner of speaking.” Energy and excitement bubbling, Abigail ran over to their horses. “Do you still have the other map?”

“I do. But hold your horses, Abi. I need to tell you something.”

Her words seem to fall on deaf ears. Abigail had a wide grin across her face as her fingers swept across the map. “Does the name Gold Dog Tess ring any bells?”

“Old ones, and not good ones. Heard she was mad as a cut snake even on a good day. Thankfully her legend died when the last money train she tried to rob crashed with her and her whole gang on it forty years ago.” She sidled up beside Abigail and leaned in as if the maps would offer her a clue as to what was going through her partner’s head.

“What about her?”

The grin grew wider. “They never found anything.”

“Anything? Any what?”

Abigail threw her arms wide as her gaze remained fixed at the map before her.

“Anything! No train, no bodies.”

“Well that’s because the train crashed inside of a tunnel and the whole place caved down on top of it” Juniper jabbed a finger onto the worn map at the site. “You’d be digging through mud and stone till your teeth fall out. Even the rail barons balked at retrieving it and you *know* their type.”

That drew a knowing laugh from Abigail. “I knew you’d say that! Which is why I needed this map!” she said as she waved around her recent procurement. “See, heard it from an old timer just last month. That lil’ mountain used to be a whole den of mining sites waaay before the trains, see?”

Juniper’s brows furrowed as she watched the new map get placed above the older one. Sure enough, the details on the surroundings matched, with the one difference being the presence of several faded crosses dotted around the area.

“They were long since mined out when they built the railroad tunnel. But that whole mountain is one big crisscross of tunnels already. So, I thought what could be the chances...” Abigail’s finger slid across the paper and stopped at a point. “That one mineshaft could be close to where the train vanished...”

Juniper let out a laugh. “So, you are betting on the train having crashed close enough to one of these old, abandoned and likely deadly mineshafts that we can just walk right in and find the old iron horse in-tact, unburied and still burdened with it’s valuable cargo that one of the craziest women in the West tried to rob?”

Abigail looked up at her. “Look, I know it’s a long shot but...”

“You *know* that’s selling it short,” Juniper interrupted. “Abigail, this is stretching things. If everything was intact somewhere why didn’t Tess just walk out of there.”

“Maybe she got unlucky! Or got lost? She likely didn’t have oil and it’d be mighty dark and...”

“Oh, for Pete’s sake...”

“I got a good feeling about this one, Juni!” Abigail pleaded.

“Abigail.” Hands descending to her hips, Juniper’s voice took a firm tone that caused Abigail to shut her mouth. “I got a letter this morning. They are calling me home.”

“So? It’s not like it’d be the first time” Abigail’s voice grew quiet. “What’s the problem?”

“They are *really* insistent.” Juniper sighed. “That lone daughter thing has a price and it’s time that I have to pay it.”

Abigail frowned. “So the same as it always was. They’ve always been nipping your heels to go back to ‘responsibility’ for years” She waved her hands about like she was casting magic. “So, what’s changed? Really?”

“It’s just... I love my family. They said they needed me.” Juniper took a step away from Abigail and clenched her hand. “It’s been fun but, I just can’t spend all my days chasing mirages.” Her eyes widened and her hand clapped over her mouth but the words had already left it.

“Mirages?” Abigail whispered. Feeling anger bubble in her chest. “You sound just like your mother... You know how I *hate* that tone of yours!”

“Abi...”

“Don’t.” Abigail gathered the two maps together. “It bothers me so much when I feel like I’m getting talked down to.”

“I didn’t...” Juniper sucked in a breath and calmed herself. “I’m sorry. Sometimes the upbringing just leaks out.”

Abigail pushed down the frustration as she looked up at Juniper. The woman was a sun like always. A bright shining mass of blonde hair and bright blue eyes with a full, curvy figure, with a quick mind and wealth to boot. She could have any man or woman she wanted in the whole West with a shake of her hips and a wink, yet she chose a runt like herself.

“I know... I’m sorry too.” Abigail let out a breath like she could shove the negative thoughts into a closet in her head. “Look, I know my cockamamie plans have only earned us trouble, but I put my heart into them.”

Juniper nodded. “I know. But you don’t need to work so hard. You don’t need to carry a fortune. Come home with me. We will work it out with my family together.”

Abigail shrugged dejectedly. “And what?! Watch you avoid being in the same room with me when your parents come to visit?” Abigail sighed and shifted herself so Juniper’s hand slipped off. “I can’t do that to you. I get you love your family. I just... I just really want it all. You, your family’s approval, the lot!”

Juniper slowly encircled Abigail in her arms and hugged her close. “Abi...”

A few, awkward moments of silence passed between the two women before Abigail finally spoke. She peered up at Juniper with a grin. “Which I know I’ll get cause I got a *reeeeal* good feeling about this one!”

“Oh for...” Juniper gently shoved her away.

“Please!” To this Abigail clasped her hands together, maps and all. “This’ll be the last chance for adventure together before your folks chain you behind a desk. I mean, I could do it all myself...”

To this Juniper whirled around. “Oh no, I ain’t letting you stick your little head down a mineshaft on your lonesome. ‘Sides who would plan the supplies and materials without me around?”

“Then you’ll just have to follow, right?” To this Abigail reached out her hand. “Partner for life?”

Juniper sighed and looked down at the offered hand. The whole thing sounded was one of the craziest schemes yet. If her parents heard she was galivanting down some mine shafts chasing a fable she wouldn’t be surprised if they would hire men and drag her home right there. As if sensing her train of thought Abigail’s face broke into a smile. Her face being slightly covered in dirt from her being tossed earlier did little to dull the infectious energy flowing out of her that she found so endearing.

A mischievous grin formed on Abigail’s face. “Sides. Just think. It’ll be just the two of us alone. Something might just sneak itself into those pants of yours.”

“You have *no* sense for romance, I ever tell you that?” Despite her words, Juniper felt her heart skip a beat at the thoughts running through her head. She let out an exasperated groan before clasping the hand in her own. “Partner for life.”

“Yes!” Abigail cried and quickly shifted their handshake into a full embrace. “You won’t regret this!”

“Pretty sure even the devil runs for the hills when Abigail Briggs says ‘You won’t regret this’.” Juniper quipped as she smooshed the diminutive woman into her chest.

“Oh, don’t you worry. I got it all planned out!”

“Fairly sure the devil runs when you say that too.”

Abigail had indeed planned it out. Much to Juniper’s surprise there was a wagon filled with some supplies already awaiting payment from a merchant who seemed relieved to hear her family name. She added an exhaustive list of other things to the wagon that were sorely forgotten about, but after not too long they set out into the wilderness.

The trip to the site was a two-day ride across the wilderness, which allowed both passengers to think of the future ahead of them as they took turns guiding the wagon to its destination. Abigail apparently had less to worry about, with her head rested upon Juniper’s shoulder as their ride rattled along as the moon slowly rose to take its place in the night sky.

“*I will miss this,*” Juniper thought to herself as she watched the moonlight cast its soft light across the plains and the sky lit up with stars. The clatter of their wagon and Abigail’s breathing to her side mixing in with the sounds of the wilderness around them. Once she took up her family business her whereabouts would become far too important on the day to day to simply vanish into nowhere for any length of time. She was prepared to give this up, but she wasn’t sure about Abigail.

Abigail soon stirred, and stretched languidly by her side like some kind of house cat. Her eyes widened as a darkened craggy hill rose up ahead of them. "There it is!"

Juniper looked ahead and was thankful the moon was bright this evening. Indeed there was an unassuming slice of mountain poking out of the sparse landscape. "So, where is our way in?"

"Right there!" Abigail replied while pointing to what looked like a set of crumbling wooden shacks. A rustle of papers and the two maps were produced again. "The old timer I met at the tavern said he lived out of the abandoned prospector town even after most moved on. Working his tunnel chasing the promise of striking it big."

Her fingers traced a few lines until she jabbed one particular smudge. "He only stopped when the train company started digging and forced him out on one unlucky day he dug straight into their tunnel."

"And his hole is our way in?"

Abigail nodded. "That's the idea!"

"They didn't just close it up?"

"Sure did! But reckon a few sticks of dynamite could open it right up."

As they drew closer to the dilapidated ruins of the town, Juniper could only feel her unease grow. The buildings were all in various states of decay. Some had already been reduced to wooden skeletons with just the front of the structure remaining to speak of what existed there. Years of sun and wind had stripped off the paint to form an uneven canvas of colours as they moved into the main road, flanked on both sides by these landmarks to the age of crazed gold rushes.

"Hoping your tavern-mates tunnel is in better shape than this place," Juniper said.

Abigail's thoughts were too focused on the Prospector's story to hear. She guided their wagon past the ruins of the town and towards the mountain. Slowly, their path shifted into a gentle descent into what looked like a haphazardly carved basin in even more of a mess than the town before it. Shacks of all shapes and sizes dotted a landscape strewn with rusted mining tools and carts left to be claimed by the sun and dirt. Rising from the mess was a cliff-face dotted with dozens of mine shafts that dug into the rock like a moth-eaten shirt. Many had been boarded up with rotting wood, while others looked like they had collapsed from the passage of time and were clogged by stones.

Juniper was about to ask which one was theirs when Abigail shouted. "There!"

Sure, enough one rusted old shack stood out from the others. It was a bit less ragged than the rest of its kind and there, open like a mouth into the abyss, was a pristine tunnel.

Abigail was bouncing on the seat as they pulled up. As soon as the wagon stopped, she crawled into the rear and started rummaging around the supplies. "I'm going to scout it out."

Juniper couldn't help but laugh as she peered back. "Can't you wait just another day? That tunnel isn't going to move anywhere."

"Sure can't." Abigail's head poked up from the pile of supplies. "I'm fixin' to get exploring. Luck on our side and we might be able to find the old girl and her cargo before tomorrow! You can just set up camp if you need some rest."

"Not a chance," Juniper said as she reached in to pull out some water and a pan for the horses. "You go in there alone I might not be able to hear you if you get stuck in some hole."

"Hey! I've been in more mines than you got fingers," Abigail huffed. "I did *all* sorts of things before I ended up training your big butt on how to ride a horse."

Juniper laughed. "And yet it is my big butt that has to come and pull you out of trouble more often than not. I am starting to think you enjoy being the damsel in distress."

"Well, it's just I enjoy seeing your big butt move in my direction is all," Abigail grinned.

"Careful with that kinda talk or I'll give you more of it than you can handle."

"Bring it on, sugar. You know I love a challenge." Abigail soon appeared from the other side of the wagon looking like she had transformed into a prospector. A ragged old buckskin bag was slung across her shoulders along with several smaller pouches adorning her slender frame. An old lantern was already clanking about in one hand as she moved towards the tunnel's entrance to peer inside.

"Well?" she said eagerly as she held out another lantern.

Juniper finished tying the horses to the remains of a makeshift fence. She looked at the single, man-sized tunnel with a mix of apprehension and curiosity. Which was about the usual with Abigail's adventures. "Aren't we rushing this a bit?"

Abigail gave her a small adorably mischievous smile. "Well, someone is just working me hard and the deadline is looming, you understand right?"

"You know you are too damned cute sometimes." Juniper smiled back and joined her partner at the mouth to the tunnel. "Fine, suddenly feel like my legs could use the stretch. Let's be careful though."

"It'll be fine!" Abigail shifted her packs. "We got everything we need here for any emergency right here!"

"Double check."

Abigail twisted about quickly and tapped her bags in order. “Water, food, lamp oil, paper to scribble on in case we need maps. Irons in case we run into cave bandits.”

“Cave bandits...” Juniper rolled her eyes. “What about the dynamite?”

“Right here!” Abigail gave one pack twisted the packs away around until they were comfortable.

“Just, remember what you promised me,” Juniper pleaded as she took out a match and lit the lantern with a sigh.

“Minute it’s dangerous. Turn tail. I remember.” Abigail reached up and squeezed her hand in turn. “So let’s go!”

With their affirmations renewed both turned towards the tunnel. Abigail lit her torch with a match and stepped in first. Her diminutive frame slipping into the narrow mouth with ease. Juniper felt the walls close in as she stepped in after her. She felt her hips brush the sides as they squeezed past the dusty stone.

Abigail, feeling energized about entering the unknown, looked back at Juniper and giggled. “You’re lucky you adventure with me so much. If your caboose was any bigger you’d probably plug the entrance.”

“Oh hah hah,” Juniper laughed dryly. “You better hope this hole don’t get any smaller or you might get to see it.”

The mine shaft *was* as small as one would expect of a lone-man operation; thin and narrow as possible with uneven twists and turns as the past prospector apparently followed where his gut guided him, but tall enough that one could swing a pick comfortably. Occasionally the path would broaden into a uneven circle only to narrow once more as the man had dug deeper. Wooden struts supporting the ceiling looked like they were erected with whatever timber the man had on hand. Some had even been painted; likely scavenged from the abandoned buildings outside. Thankfully, none were showing signs of rot or bending.

The light from the entrance was now a distant memory when Juniper finally spoke again. “You know, I should’ve asked before but, what was the train carrying that Tess got so worked up over it. Not something heavy, right?”

Abigail ducked underneath a support that laid across their path at a slant. “Not gold bars, I can tell you that. Rumour was the cargo was some exotic collection hauled up from the far south from some long dead culture. The kind people done forgot about. Some lucky adventurers made it big digging through some old ruins.”

“And here we are digging it up again,” Juniper mused.

“Ain’t it exciting?” Abigail laughed. “Before you scrounged me up I wished I could be an adventurer too. Digging through the ruins of long dead civilizations and the like.”

Without the sun above they had little sense of time. The longer they walked through, the more Abigail's enthusiasm began to give way to nervousness. The tunnel itself was steadily becoming cramped even for her frame. Parts of the mine had partially collapsed and stones now occupied the sides of an already narrow space. Juniper had to contort and turn herself in order to pass through.

"It ain't looking good, Abi," Juniper's voice was uncomfortable loud in the cramped space.

"It'll be fine! We gotta be getting close," Abigail replied with a forced smile. "*We just gotta.*"

As if a power that be decided to listen in and answer her call, the light of the lamp fell upon a massive stone that sat across their path forward. Like a smooth, brown wall it plugged the tunnel and any thought of progressing further.

Abigail didn't even have time to feel her heart sink into her stomach when Juniper piped in. "Well, that's a problem."

"Shit." Abigail started rummaging through her pack only to be stopped by a gentle hand on her arm.

"Abi, if you thinking of using the dynamite I'd say look back at the tunnel we just came through." Juniper gestured behind them. "We'll be lucky if the whole dang mountain doesn't fall on our heads."

"I hate it, but you're right." Abigail bit her tongue. "I'm not giving up though. Always a way forward."

Juniper squinted into the darkness and lifted her lamp. "Well, there *is* a gap up the top. But no telling if you can even..."

Doing her surprisingly good impression of a lizard Abigail was already clambering up the stone. Lifting her gaze upwards Juniper eyed the hole above. Shadowed at the very top was a gap between the ceiling and obstructing stone. Barely bigger than Abigail herself, evidenced by the fact the woman in question was already squeezing her way inside.

"Now hold on!" Juniper squeaked. "What if you get stuck!"

"We got lantern oil!" Abigail's voice sounded back to her slightly muffled as the woman slowly vanished into the crevice. "Just...ugh...pour some down and you can slide me right out all quick-like!"

A slight bit of rummaging and one small pack slid out of the hole to fall into Juniper's outstretched hand. A sloshing of liquid telling of its contents. Juniper opened her mouth to protest, but realized it was far too late as Abigail's boots had already vanished into the hole. Woman, packs, lantern, and all slipped into the gap like a snake sliding into its den.

“I’m just going to check!” The reply was even more muffled now.

“That woman is going to make me grey before my time, I swear...” Juniper muttered. She stared up at the light from Abigail’s lantern as it shuffled around above. The movement at least providing her solace that nothing had gone wrong yet. Lacking anything to do but wait, her feet started to pace in what little space was available.

She had managed several small laps before the light above suddenly vanished with a sharp crack noise that echoed above her.

“Abi...ABIGAIL!” Juniper scrambled to climb the stone and grasp her hands around the hole. The narrow space proved a tighter fit for her larger build, but she grit her teeth, dropped her hat to the dirt and pressed herself into the crevice regardless. Sucking in her breath she grasped and pulled her way forward.

“Abigail! ABIGAIL! Say something!” she cried. Her voice loud in her ears. Her hands scrabbled for any hold she could find. She felt the ceiling graze the top of her head and shoulders as she crawled desperately. Straining to hear any signs of life ahead.

Suddenly a light shone ahead. A narrow beam illuminating the narrow path like a sunbeam through a barn window. “Juni? Can you hear me!”

Relief flooded her. “Abi! Are you okay! Just... ugh... Look, I’m coming!”

Abigail’s face popped up ahead briefly. Her features covered in fresh dirt but she was beaming a smile at her. “Don’t worry! I’m *more* than okay! You ain’t going to believe what I found! Get a wiggle on!”

“Get a wiggle... You had me thinking the worst!” she growled. Abigail’s chipper tone making her feel a mix of anger and confusion as she continued to wriggle herself forward. By the time she managed to reach the other side of the hole she had a list of choice words to say to her.

Words that died in her mouth as she made one final pull and her head popped out into a spacious cavern on the other side. “What in tarnation...”

Abigail’s laughter sounded out below her and echoed wildly through the dark area. “Told you! I told you! We found it! This *has* to be it!”

Juniper looked at her surroundings. Sure enough the cavern was large. Much larger than a single old prospector could manage on their own. Much less with vertical walls rising up above her head and a width enough to fit a wagon.

“*Or a train*” she admitted to herself. She braced her hands on the lip and shoved to remove herself from the crevice but found resistance as her rear refused to budge any further. “Uh, little help Abi.”

“Being honest I am surprised you could pull your butt through that,” Abigail said as she reached up and took hold of Juniper’s hands. “You must’ve been real worried.”

“Again with my butt...” Juniper sighed. “I thought you were buried in a cave-in when the light went out!” Juniper huffed as her partner began to pull and she felt her ass slide across the rough stone. “My worry was for.... WOAH!”

The last word became a startled yell as her body accelerated out of the opening and sailed straight into the dirt.

Abigail reached down with a sheepish smile. “Sorry.”

Juniper accepted the help and stood up. Brushing herself off as she spun and looked at her surroundings. “Well, I’ll be the first to admit you were right. Your old tavern-mate was telling the truth. He dug straight into the train tunnel.”

“And now we just have to find the train! The old girl *has* to be down here somewhere!” Abigail shone the lantern back and forth as she tried to discern a direction to start.

“Right, but about that...” Juniper said as she looked down at her feet. “Where are the tracks?”

Seemingly for the first time emerging into her discovery, Abigail shone the light down at the ground. Sure enough, the rail line was missing. A smooth indentation in the dirt remained where the metal would have stretched along the tunnel.

“Well ain’t that strange...” Abigail’s excitement was quelled as she bent down to examine the ground closer. A sudden realization dawned as her light fell on a set of footprints. “Someone got here first?!”

“Sure looks that way, but why did up the rail?” Juniper frowned as she shone a light closer to the prints. “And why barefoot?”

“Who knows! All I care about is that *someone* has been here and *that* means someone might’ve found the train!” Abigail growled and started following the indentations that once was the rail further into the tunnel. Juniper followed along behind quietly. Her curiosity less on the train and more towards the mystery around the train tracks.

“Maybe another fortune finder got in, but rail isn’t worth the scrap. Much less the effort of carting it out of here...” she thought to herself. *“Just who and why?”*

Abigail jogged ahead. Holding the lantern out before her and swinging it this way and that as if to conjure the train from the shadows. Grumbling loudly and incomprehensibly as she went.

The small woman suddenly stopped in advance when her light shone upon a glint of metal. Her lantern drooped. “No way...”

Juniper walked up beside her and her eyes widened. Like a long-dead skeleton sat the remains of a train carriage. Everything from the cabin to the walls and roof was gone. All that remained was the wrought-iron base and some of the wheels. Abigail stepped beside and shone the light further to see this repeated on several shadowed remains that ran into the darkness.

“This is just...” Juniper started.

Abigail let out a long groan. “Just when I think I actually did something right for a change.”

“Hey, don’t be like that,” Juniper said, rubbing one of Abigail’s shoulders reassuringly. “We found the train, or what’s left of it anyway, so you were right... Just...” she said softly.

“Someone got here first,” Abigail sagged into her and shook. “I honestly thought I had a unique idea! That for once my idea actually had a chance.”

“Abi, look. You knew this was a long shot.” Raising herself back to her full height Juniper gave her best smile in the dim lighting. “But what an adventure! It didn’t matter if we found the treasure or not, right?”

“It mattered to me!” Abigail’s face broke into tears. “You are heading back home soon! This wasn’t just some adventure to *me!*” She gestured to herself so hard her packs jangled. “I *needed* this.”

“Abi, I keep telling you it’s fine...”

“No it’s not!” Emotions poured out the small woman. “I don’t want to be the woman who married into riches, and I don’t want you to be the heiress who...”

“Abigail, please.” Juniper cut her off. She caught her hands just before they descended to her hips out of habit, and instead held them up in surrender. “I just... I worry about you. This whole obsession that you aren’t good enough for me. You have *earned* my love. Isn’t that enough?”

“No, I mean, yes! But...” Abigail didn’t know when her breath started to catch in her throat and her heart thundered in her ears. “I’m just scared. Scared you’ll suffer for *my* sake in this relationship, and I’ll be powerless to do anything cause where you are from is not like out here...” she sniffled. “I won’t be able to just... sink my boot into someone’s balls if they look at you funny.”

“I mean, there might be *some* moments,” Juniper said as she wrapped her arms around Abigail. The gesture was returned and the two women embraced each other in the flickering lantern-light. “I appreciate you wanting to protect me, love.”

They rocked quietly together for a few moments before Abigail sniffled before finally speaking again. “Well, seeing as I dragged you here. Want to see the rest of this place?”

Juniper nodded. “I am curious about the rest of this train.”

The warm embrace ended with both leaning into one another and sharing a passionate kiss. Beginning to move a lot more slowly, the pair examined the remains of the train as they walked by. It was picked apart like vultures on a carcass. No remnants of the wooden carriage or the plush seating remained. Far too methodically to be anything but human hands.

“Still no idea why someone would even go to the trouble. Iron maybe, but they ripped out the chairs, wood and everything down to the screws,” Juniper said.

Abigail seemed to look at the remains for the first time. “I can’t imagine someone hauling a whole train out of the tunnel we came in on. There must be another way in.”

“Like from up ahead?” As if to answer the notion a light started to come into view from around a bend in the tunnel ahead of them. It filled the tunnel ahead from floor to ceiling, much more than what a single old lantern could produce. Moreover, rather than the flicking warm light of a flame, the light possessed the soft blue shine like moonlight.

“Well, that is a little bit of a relief. We won’t have to squeeze through...” Juniper’s speech was cut short as Abigail’s hand gently cupped her mouth. Slowly, the hand removed itself and pointed forward. Standing in the light was a humanoid shadow stretching across the ground. Juniper was surprised she missed it, but as she stared, she noted that it was completely motionless.

“Maybe it’s just a rock,” Juniper whispered.

“What kind of rock has arms?” Abigail hissed and adjusted her holster. “Might be another treasure seeker.

“You could be right.” Juniper glanced behind her. “Maybe we should just turn around and go back?”

“Maybe they are the ones who stripped the train?” Abigail inched forward, an excitement growing on her features. “They could have the gold!”

“We are *not* robbing anybody, Abi!”

“I didn’t say anything about robbing!”

Juniper waved an arm towards the shadow. “Then why mention the gold?!”

“They could be bandits!” Abigail’s hissed louder.

“That’s not the point!”

“Sure it is! If they bandits, we ain’t guilty for relieving them!”

“It’s still trouble!”

“You’re being too loud!”

The shadow shifted. It began to move into a run.

“Look, they heard you!” It was then the singular shadow split apart into several figures. All moving rapidly towards them. Abigail pulled out her six-shooter in one smooth motion.

The first of the figures rounded the curve and sprinted into view. A woman. Her face was covered by a red veil that descended from an elaborate headdress with long multi-

coloured feathers that exploded out in a fan from the back of her head like the tail of a turkey. A loose band of cloth was wrapped around her chest, and a glance lower showed a similar one draped between her thighs in a small gesture of modesty.

Juniper held up her hands. “Wait, please! We don’t mean any harm!”

It was then Juniper noticed something even more peculiar than the clothes as the mysterious woman drew closer. Her body shape wasn’t like anything she had ever seen on any bandit or ruffian in the West. The woman was positively pear-shaped. Hips that surpassed the shoulders twice over with generous thighs thundered towards the pair as the stranger charged. Soon she was joined by several others wearing similar garments and bearing similar, voluptuous figures.

And none of them seemed to hear her.

“Are those bandits?!” Juniper hissed to Abigail before turning back to the charging crowd. “Let’s be calm now!”

Their bore down on them like a wave of feminine flesh.

Abigail gritted her teeth and raised her pistol. “Hold it! Or I’ll shoot!”

The lead feathered woman twirled a thin piece of cloth rapidly in one hand and flicked.

CRACK

“Gah!” Abigail yelped as her lantern was shattered out of her hands. “Juni! Cover your...”

CRACK

Another stone cracked into Juniper’s, and suddenly the pair were plunged into darkness.

“Varmints!” Abigail shouted. She aimed blindly ahead of her.

BANG

Juniper’s senses were dazzled by a flash of light from the gunshot. Her ears rang as the sound reverberated around them. She felt a quick, tightening sensation around her ankles as something whizzed out of the darkness and wrapped around her feet with unusual weight. She tried to take a step, only to experience her body meeting the ground as her legs failed to move as expected.

“Ooof!” Her breath rushed out of her. A weight fell on her quickly and strong hands gripped her arms and legs. Pinning her to the ground.

“Juni! Let go!” Abi’s voice shouted out beside her. The strained tone telling that she wasn’t in a good position either. Juniper twisted and wriggled as she felt her arms and legs quickly bound up. The fight only lasted a few moments.

“Oh you *better* not harm a hair on her head or I swear I’ll...nngh!” Abigail’s voice was reduced to a muffled growl.

“Let us go!” Juniper felt the cloth wrap around her mouth. “I’m a Callah...mmph!”

Soon both women were tied and bound. Their mysterious captors picked them up by the arms and legs wordlessly, and began to carry them towards the light. As they rounded the curve of the track, their eyes fell on the source of the illumination. It wasn’t the moon, or even outside. The light came from plants that snaked up and around the tunnel like a spiderweb. Small fruits shone across the ceiling with iridescent blue light like the night sky.

“*Mnng! Mmngn!*” Abigail’s muffled cries bought Juniper’s attention for a moment. The woman jerked her head forward.

Juniper followed her motion to look ahead. And if her mouth wasn’t full of cloth she would have gasped.

The train tunnel was no longer there. Instead, a massive cavern sat ahead that was carved from the insides of the mountain with an enormous structure looming in the middle. Large stone blocks formed several rising squares towards a summit cut by the longest set of stairs Juniper had ever laid eyes on. The top of the structure held some kind of odd statue that was too far to make out.

Several smaller dwellings lay scattered about the structure, and it was from one of these that another woman emerged and approached them, flanked by another pair of Red-Veils. Like the others her proportions were enormous, but an air of importance came from her pale curvaceous body from the golden finery that shone even in the dim lighting. Wide thighs were wrapped in white cloth jingling with golden rings, while her white-wrapped swollen chest was kept aloft by similarly shining golden chains that slunk under her bust to then look up and around her shoulders. Black hair was wrapped tightly into a bun and topped with a golden circlet that also bore a white veil that covered her features.

She held a golden sceptre aloft in one hand, bearing the symbol of a rabbit, which she waved frantically towards them. “*Coyotes?! Now of all times? Does the auspices seek to constantly test my... Wait...*”

The Red-Veils holding the two didn’t reply. They stood as still as statues as the mysterious woman drew closer.

“A woman!” The woman said as she reached Abigail first.

“MMgh!” Abigail’s attempt at shouting went as her face was cupped in one hand and lifted by the mysterious woman to be forcibly turned this way and that like someone examining livestock.

A shake of the head, and Abigail’s head was dropped as quickly as it was grasped. “Yes indeed a woman! But, sorely lacking.”

Abigail did her best attempt at assaulting the woman with a glare. “MMGHH!”

Juniper found herself under inspection next as the woman stepped towards her. The white veil stared at her for a few moments silently. Her whole body seemed to freeze in place.

“FINALLY! AHAAHAA!” Cackling, the woman spread her arms wide, hands high in reverence as her covered face tilted towards the ceiling of the cave as her body trembled. Her golden adornments chattering loudly. “On the 490th great moon She has deemed my efforts worthy! Oh, I was beginning to lost faith, but no no no!”

Juniper flinched as the woman flicked her white veil back down towards her. Her hands drew close but didn’t touch as if she was a delicate vase that she was afraid to break. “She bears the mark of the Sun Gods. Bright and vibrant! With a holy body most worthy! Yes, yes! *Most* worthy!”

“You will release her!” The woman gestured with her sceptre and she found herself gently placed on the ground. Her bindings were removed quickly and silently. Hands free, she ripped out the gag in her mouth.

Scrambling to her feet she pointed a finger at the lead woman. “Who are you people?!”

“Children of Coyolxāuhqui, oh Blessed one. I am Metztli, priestess of this congregation. We have been waiting for your arrival for a *very* long time.” She bowed slightly. “I was... concerned that you will never come at all, hah!”

Between the sudden kidnapping and even more sudden release, Juniper found her thoughts jumbled. “You have?”

“Mmgh!” Abigail reminded those assembled of her existence.

Priorities asserted themselves. Juniper drew herself up and pointed. “Then release my partner!”

“If the Blessed One wishes it so, it shall be!” Metztli bowed again and waved her sceptre again towards the Red-Veils still holding Abigail like a piece of luggage. “You will release the scrawny one.”

A moment later Abigail was leaping herself to her feet and placing herself in front of Juniper protectively. Fists balled up and ready, Abigail rolled her shoulders. “Now give me my gun back!”

“Such things are not needed here,” the woman waved her hand dismissively towards Abigail without even looking in her direction. “This is a sacred place. But if *you* wish it, we will return them to you... They just need to be cleansed of outside filth first.”

“What about my packs!” Abigail added. “You varmints shook off everything I had but my darn canteen!”

Juniper stepped forward and rested a calming hand on Abigail. “You are being awfully welcoming to us.”

“You are our Blessed One! Such a thing is only natural,” Metzli held her arms wide. “All that is ours, is yours!”

“Thank you, but...” Juniper tilted her head quizzically. “Why do you keep calling me that?”

It was Metzli’s turn to tilt her head. “Blessed One? It is what you are! Were you not guided here by divine providence?” She raised her hand to point at the train tunnel behind them. “I mean, it is not like we get many visitors being where we are. Much less one so fitting of the description in the teachings, no?”

Juniper turned to Abigail and mouthed out her confusion silently. Abigail echoed her confusion back to her with her face.

“You... Are our Blessed One, yes?” Metzli asked, a little less energy in her voice.

Her mind awhirl, Juniper could only open and close her mouth trying to find the right words.

Abigail piped up first. “Sure she is! She was guided here by a message from the... uh...”

“Moon. Yes.” Juniper nodded enthusiastically. Recalling the introduction to this bizarre conversation.

Metzli seemed to sag with relief. “Of course you were. Such as it was written!” She then turned and waved to one of the women who appeared with her. “You will bring the tribute!”

The Red-veil stepped forward with a bundle of cloth and knelt, holding it up like an offering as they began unwrapping. Juniper’s eyes widened as pair of beautiful golden bracelets were revealed. Their shining surface was engraved with a myriad of patterns unlike anything she had ever seen even in the most notable of jewellery stores.

“They are gorgeous...” Juniper whispered.

“They are yours.” Metzli gestured. “As apology for your less than acceptable treatment earlier... My attendants are forceful, but this place *must* be guarded.” She turned her head towards Abigail.

“I...” Juniper began, but Abigail needed no further invitation. Taking one of the bracelets and examining it with eager eyes.

“This is real!” Abigail said with a wide smile. The bracelet was slipped over her wrist without another word. “I’ve never worn real gold before!”

Juniper felt apprehension over such an offering. Such valuable gifts never came without their catches in the circles she grew up in. But Abigail’s enthusiasm and joy washed over her, and she soon took the other for herself.

“They are indeed beautiful,” she said quietly, as she slipped it over her own wrist. The bangle was cool to the touch and light. “Thank you!”

Metztli opened her arms again in a grand, jingling gesture. “I have no need for thanks! I should be thanking you! But come, your journey must have been arduous, and it is very nearly dawn! Rest, relax, and we will prepare a feast for you! When you are full and ready we will talk more, Blessed One”

Juniper did acknowledge she was hungry, but the thought of being brought further into this mysterious community for any reason didn’t sit right. She wanted nothing more than to go back to their wagon. But a glance behind her showed the group of Red-Veils from earlier standing as placidly as a wall.

Abigail caught her look and gave her an affirming nod.

Juniper nodded. “I.. We accept your hospitality.”

Abigail put on her best smile and elbowed Juniper happily. “Food sounds great! Don’t you think so, ‘Blessed One’?”

She could swear Metztli smiled behind her veil. “Then my attendants will guide you.” The woman bowed so deep the band around her chest sagged under the weight of her burgeoning chest, giving a full view of her bare assets as they bounced. Standing back up straight she waved to the Red-Veils behind them. “You will escort them to a suitable abode!”

“There, you will eat.” She finished. “Now, I must leave and see to the preparations!”

Metztli hurried off with an eager step, while Abigail and Juniper soon found themselves escorted further into the settlement by the group of silent Red-Veils. To their surprise the strange fruits weren’t the only things growing there. Against all reason the area was covered in farms that inexplicably grew all manner of vegetables and plants. Attempts to converse with their Red-Veiled escort as they walked proved as useless as before, much to Juniper’s frustration.

“This is far too mysterious for my liking, Abi.” Juniper remarked as they passed by a small field of wheat.

“I’m excited! Do you think this is what them adventurers felt like walking into the ruin. But here we are walking in a living, breathing one!”

“You seem enthusiastic about all this.” Juniper said as they passed closer to the enormous staired temple.

Abigail was looking about with intense curiosity. “Why aren’t you? This is *exactly* what I’ve wanted to do with my life! Meeting a lost civilisation that just so happens to *worship* you!? Gold offerings! Ain’t this amazing?”

Juniper glanced around at the Red-veiled women that surrounded them. She thought it far less than amazing. “Well, if it makes you happy.” She leaned in closer to whisper. “I just don’t trust them.”

“Neither do I!” Abigail whispered back with a nod. “But if they wanted to kill us, they could have done so when we were trussed up pigs. Let’s just play along till we get our bearings, and hightail it if we feel like it. They’ll have to sleep sometime!”

They were led towards a larger stone structure within the settlement with a red tattered cloth door that functioned as a meagre expression of privacy. The Red-Veils stood aside as Juniper and Abigail walked in. Within was a lush, spacious room filled with golden ornaments and rugs covered in plush, red cushions spread across the floor. A low circular wooden table sat in the middle. The room was illuminated much like the outside with bundles of the mysterious glowing plant placed on beaten iron holders on the surrounding walls.

Abigail made herself at home by flopping dead onto the pile of fluffy cushions with a sigh. “Mm, comfortable!”

Juniper could see two pairs of feet standing just outside the entrance. “They left guards.”

“We’ll figure if they are there to keep us in or others out later.” Abigail replied. Examining her golden bracelet with interest.

“I’m wondering where they got all this cloth” Juniper reached down and felt the material on the cushions. “And the wood. There aren’t any trees down here *or* outside. This is all just too strange, isn’t it?”

“Maybe they got magic trees and cotton too! They had all sorts of things growing down here.” Abigail waved at the strange plant lights on the walls.

Juniper stood on her toes to get a better look at them. The fruits were oval in shape and ribbed like a wrinkly ball. Leathery and hard to the touch. Part of her wondered if they could even be eaten.

Grrrrrumble

The thought of food caused her stomach to protest loudly. “Pardon.”

“Well, we did sort of skip dinner in the excitement,” Abigail said.

Juniper snorted. “If I recall, *someone* wanted to jump into the hole as soon as we pulled up rather than make camp and eat. *I* wanted to rest up.”

Abigail shrugged. “Well alright, *I* made us skip dinner. But now we get to experience some exotic food. It all worked out!”

“I wish I had your enthusiasm sometimes, Abi.” Juniper wandered over and sank into the cushions beside her. “This is just all too much.”

Juniper wanted nothing more than to push the thought of food from her mind, but the emptiness of her stomach distracted from anything else. “But... Maybe I can think better after a meal. It would be rude of us.”

As if summoned by the thought a rich scent wafted in from the outside. Red-veiled attendants marched in silently holding wooden platters crowded with vegetable dishes of all kinds arranged in a manner that looked like they were being served a rainbow. As their table vanished underneath the assortment of platters that were laid before them, Juniper found her nose assaulted by an array of scents that made her mouth water. She can't remember a time she felt this hungry before.

A steaming golden jug was paced in the middle of their feast, with two matching cups that gleamed in the soft light. Their task completed, the Red-Veils bowed and filed out just as silently as they moved in. The two woman stared at the feast only for a moment before falling in on it.

“Mmh!” Abigail moaned as she popped a roasted sweet potato into her mouth. “Thish ish delish!”

Juniper felt so famished she forwent the need for etiquette and grabbed a thick mushroom with her fingers and bit into it. Her tongue was set ablaze with the burning taste of chilli and salt.

She waved at her mouth in a vain attempt at cooling the hot sensation in her throat. “I've never had anything so spicy... hah”

Abigail's eyes were already watering. “I know! Isn't it great?”

“It's good but, I usually can't handle spice,” Juniper said, and yet she continued to stuff her face with the seasoned vegetables one after another.

Abigail laughed. “You can learn to like it!”

Regardless of enthusiasm, the urge for a beverage to quash the heat only grew as time went on. As the meal slowly wound down and the plates became emptier of their contents, the golden jug in the middle became more enticing. When the last morsel was eaten, both women reached for it simultaneously.

Abigail snagged it first. “Allow me, ‘Blessed One’”

“Oh, knock it off. It feels too strange,” Juniper replied.

The contents of the jug were slowly poured. The liquid was a rich brown colour, steaming and with a surprisingly sweet scent. “It's not something you are used to? I thought your family treated you the same.”

Juniper leaned back into the pile of cushions. “They did spoil me. Traveling with you taught me that my upbringing was far from normal... but...”

“But?” Abigail passed over a cup.

“It was always with attachments.” Juniper took the cup and looked curiously at the liquid. “Beautiful dresses so that I can impress guests and suitors with my looks. The best teachers so I can take over the company. I just did what I was told, and it was never for the sake of *me*.”

“Never thought of it that way.” Abigail sidled over until her hips bumped into Juniper’s own. “You know... I never did ask why you chose to go with me that day. Part of me still doesn’t understand.”

Juniper looked at her and tilted her head. “You don’t?”

“N-not that I... The rest of me thanks my stars every day that you did!” Abigail tried to distract herself tracing the odd patterns on her golden cup. “But you could be living it up in a mansion, but instead you are now deep in some dark hole in the ground surrounded by veiled weirdos.”

“Mmm, you do have a point,” Juniper started with a smile.

That caused Abigail to jerk and stare at her with wide eyes. “There’s a but in there, right?”

Juniper swirled her cup. Letting the sweet aroma wash over her. “But... There’s no bigger weirdo than you here.”

“Oh, thanks!” Abigail playfully bumped her shoulder with hers.

“You never treated me like a tool.” Juniper continued, turning her body in her cushions till she faced Abigail completely. “And that captivated me. Which is why I want to see you happy, and why I am here in this cavern... surrounded by weirdos.”

Abigail quivered as Juniper’s legs intertwined with hers.

“Plus, it helps that you are adorable, charming, roguish and a great kisser.”

That brought a shade of red across Abigail’s features. “Ah... Haha... Heck”

“To us?” Juniper held out her cup.

Abigail raised hers, but just because their beverages touched she hesitated. “...But do you are still going to go back?”

Juniper sighed. “I do... At least... I don’t know.”

Drawing her cup back Abigail swore under her breath. “There I go again, ruining a moment. Look, it’ll not be a problem. We’ve hit paydirt with this!” She gestured grandly around them. “Just have to go along with it. Gather some more ‘offerings’ and then skedaddle!”

“Abi, we can’t just take their gold and run,” Juniper huffed. “I doubt it’ll be that easy besides.”

“Easy? It’ll be easy as...” Abigail was in the process of pulling her bracelet off. The piece of jewellery was a bit tighter than she remember it being, but with a bit of effort she finally slipped it past her wrist and yanked it free. “Pie! See, this bracelet alone would be worth a pretty penny and they just gave it to us as a welcome gift. They said everything was yours!”

“I’m sure it was just a figure of speech.” Juniper looked at her own bracelet that wrapped snugly over her wrist. “Maybe it’s a cultural thing.”

“Just saying if they offer more your way, I’ll be *more* than happy to take them.” Abigail grinned as she slipped her bracelet into her pocket and patted it appreciatively. “I’ll be able to march right up to your folks decked out in enough gold they’d want to slap me on a coin!”

Juniper sighed. “Okay, just... Let’s not push out luck.”

“Heck, I think we lucky enough already!” Abigail

Both women nodded at this and their cups clinked in a dull metallic sound. Raising the cups to their lips. As soon as the taste hit her senses, Juniper knew what it was instantly.

“This is chocolate!” The rich flavor was unmistakable, though it still held a hint of spice and honey unlike the rich cocoa taste she was used to in celebratory gatherings. She lost herself in her cup and drained it enthusiastically.

Abigail sipped on hers. “So, this is chocolate.” She licked her lips as she sipped it. “I always watched your folks drink this over the winter.” Her face scrunched up. “*This* is what I was jealous over? I feel like my teeth are going to fall out.”

Juniper laughed. “You never grew up with sweets, I forget. Must have come as a shock.” She licked the last of the substance from the rim of her cup. “I love the stuff.”

“Well, you can have the rest of the jug to yourself then.” Abigail pulled out her canteen and emptied the water into a bowl, before painstaking pouring the melted chocolate into it. “I’m gonna keep mine for later. That or sell it!”

“Oh, for Pete’s sake Abi,” Juniper sighed, but was secretly grateful for having the rest of the jug to herself. The rich taste helped calm her nerves from all the excitement today, and she yearned for more. Pouring the rest of the jug into her cup she raised it to her mouth and drank.

Grrrrrrnnnn

Juniper lost herself in the frothy liquid. Each gulp washed away the stress of the last few hours, and she felt a sense of bliss descend on her.

Creeeeeeeeeeeeak

Abigail had finished pouring her chocolate into her canteen and started glancing around the room. “You hear that?”

“It’s just the table,” Juniper said from within her cup.

GRRRRNNNN

The sound grew more insistent. Loud enough that Juniper’s drink went down the wrong pipe and she coughed. “Hch! Gah!...”

“That ain’t no creaking wood...” Abigail turned away and stood. She clicked her tongue as her hands reached for a pistol that wasn’t on her hip any longer.

Juniper quickly drained the rest of the delicious beverage before moving to stand.

SHHRRRRRIP!

That was a sound that both women recognized immediately. The sound of cloth ripping behind them. Both women spun about. Abigail’s formed into fists, while Juniper gripped her golden cup like a makeshift club.

Juniper could only see a normal stone wall with a pile of cushions in front of it. “What was that? We ripped something,” Juniper said carefully.

Abigail’s gaze was not on the wall. “Uh, Juniper. Think your jeans finally gave up the ghost.”

Juniper gasped and dropped the cup to the floor. Reaching behind her she felt her backside for any holes. Heat rose to her face as her fingers touched bare skin.

“What!? Oh, not nooow!” Juniper groaned. “My spare clothes are back in the wagon!”

“I always thought those things were a dam about to break,” Abigail chuckled.

Juniper whirled, her face flush with embarrassment. “Abi, please! This isn’t the time!”

Holding up her hands defensively, Abigail gave her best cheeky smile. “I’m sure we can find something to mend it here. I’m handy with a needle and...”

SHHRRRRRIP!

“Long as you stop moving and splitting it more.”

“I’m not!” Juniper had been only trying to keep the split seam closed with her hands. But even as she stood there, she felt split lengthening up towards her belt. “Gosh, why now?! I can’t have gained weight from just this meal!”

“Chocolate normally doesn’t do this, right?” Abigail stared at the jug like it was suddenly full of snakes.

Grrrrrrnnnnn!

“Abi!”

“No need to panic! You saw what these weirdos wear. They wouldn’t care seeing a bit of cheek!”

SHRRRRRIP!

Abigail's voice fell as the sound of tearing clothes came from her this time. Her hands slipped slowly behind to feel her rear, but failed to find a hole. "What in the Sam Hill..."

"Lower, Abi," Juniper said. She had been watching the whole thing and pointed. Abigail's fingers slid down to below her groin to find that her own jeans had split in two starting from the middle.

"Oh for... I only had a sip of the stuff!" Abigail growled.

Juniper wanted nothing more than to grab and shake the woman. "Abi, chocolate doesn't work like this!"

SHRIP! SHRIP SHRIP!

"Nothing works like this!" The split in her backside was steadily growing. Tough threading designed to last through the roughest rides was failing one by one. It was then she became suddenly aware of a growing sense of tightness that grew all through her jeans.

"Then what is going on!?" Abigail felt her own riding jeans as steadily widen her new hole around her fingertips.

Creeeeeeeeeeeeak!

"I don't know!" Juniper groaned. The leather of her belt squeezed into her skin like a hangman's noose around her waist. "It's n-not stopping!"

Abigail glanced up from her own problem, and her eyes widened. "Juni... You're growing..."

"I know!"

"No, I mean, I can *see* you growing!" Abigail pointed at her.

Juniper mirrored her gestured. "So are you!"

GUUUUUURGLE!

Another rumble shook her from her core. She watched as the material of her jeans shift and stretch around her thighs as if something was moving underneath. Like two waterskins drinking deep of a river her legs swelled thicker even as she watched them. Every moment another pulse rippled through her lower body and her jeans lost another set of threads. The hole widening as her lower body sought to escape it's denim prison.

"Uh... ahhh!" Juniper's let out a soft whimper of disbelief as she pressed her hands into her legs and felt the growth. This was no mirage. "What is happening!?"

Abigail was consumed by her own changes. Her body had never had any sort of figure before, but now she was sporting a pair of thighs that gave her the first feeling of

femininity. The unfamiliar weight on her hips felt oddly pleasing. A glance behind herself and her eyes lit up. As her thighs swelled, so did her other something else. Gentle pulses rippled through her ass cheeks as they rounded and filled with the unusual energy. She couldn't resist bending forward and seeing the hills that sat upon her the plains that was once her backside. Her eyes remained glued to her lower body as the mysterious growth slowed and ceased as quickly as it began.

"Uh... I think... It stopped," she muttered softly. "Juni I think... mppph!"

Suddenly a jolt of electricity surged from her nethers and up her spine. The sudden burst of ecstasy caused her to topple to the ground and her mind fall into a haze. The tingling reverberated throughout her body before building in her chest.

"OooooOOOH Nelly!" she moaned.

Grrrrrrgggle!

Creeeeeak!

Abigail's eyes flicked down. Her buttoned shirt had begun to shift as her front suddenly bore two new mounds underneath the cloth. Scrambling, she pulled her shirt apart to witness her breasts, once a pristine prairie on her front, slowly bloat and swell to two modest handfuls before the effect suddenly ceased.

She sat there on the cushions panting. "Okay, *now* I think it's done."

"No it isn't!" Juniper yelled.

Her jeans bulging at the sides and quivering from holding back the wave of growth, Juniper felt like a cork about to pop. Tears formed across every seam visible with her skin bulging through every opening. Two doughy ass cheeks rounded and pushed at the burst backside, giving a full view of her laced underwear that had steadily shrank into the growing crevice.

"Uhghhn!" Juniper groaned. "It...It's too much... Too tight!"

Abigail scrambled to her feet and scrambled over cushions. "Juni! Just... Hold out. It's bound to stop soon!"

Teeth clenched. Juniper hissed through her teeth. "It hurts!"

Panic for her partner setting in Abigail's hands flew and attempted to tug her jeans off her. "I'll get this off, just... don't bite your tongue or nothing"

CREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK!

"MMmgh! It's my belt!... too tight... It's really digging into me!" Juniper's hands frantically tried to free her hips from the leather band, but the prong holding it might as well have been nailed to her as the tightness only increased. "Get it off! GET IT OFF"

“Okay! Okay!” Not needing another word Abigail’s hands soon joined with Juniper’s as they desperately tried to pull the leather strap free even their occupant’s body threatened to burst free of it by force.

GRRRRRNNN

Juniper’s thighs ballooned further beneath the denim as another pulse filled her body. Seams cracked and split across the length of her pants like an overripe fruit fit to burst. The belt tightened further and refused to budge.

“MMGH! HHHG” Juniper gasped between efforts.

Abigail pulled with all her weight. The prong slowly began to free itself from the belt hole it was stuck in. “Almost... Got it...”

CREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK!

With one final tug the belt sprung free. “Got it!” Was all Abigail managed to say before Juniper’s jeans exploded in her face. Like the dam she always thought they were the fabric was reduced to shreds as bulging, pale white skin burst free in a rippling wave towards her.

“Oh golly,” Abigail mouthed.

“Ooh... haaah,” Juniper couldn’t help but moan as a wave of relief washed over her; a wave only to be overcome by abject horror when she looked down. Her lower half was no longer one she recognized. Plump thighs and hips that surpassed her shoulders now sat beneath her. Her hands reached down to touch her skin and she recoiled. Shocked to feel that these fat pillars were now her own.

“What is this?! What happened!?” Juniper began to panic. “This... this is impossi... ooh!,” she gasped as she felt another surge of energy.

GUUUUUUUUUUURGLE!

Her hands leapt down to her ass. Wide and pillowy cheeks jiggled wildly as they began to grow. Skin sliding across her fingers as her rear slowly protruded further from her body to become two full, round balloons that wobbled far beyond what she could hope to reach.

GRRRRRGLE

Abigail’s eyes widened. “Uh, you might want to hold onto something.”

Juniper looked at Abigail seemingly for the first time since the event started. “What!? What can possibly... Oohhhh!”

A pleasurable tingling filled her body as an energy began to fill her chest. The shock was like a thunderstorm on her senses. Her legs wobbled and Abigail rushed to catch her as Juniper fell back. Something she was entirely unprepared for as her partner’s new,

and entirely unfamiliar weight soon collapsed on her to send both women down onto the cushions, with Abigail herself serving as one extra.

Juniper's body shuddered as the mysterious energy began its work. Like two buns rising in an oven, her chest began to swell. Slowly at first, like the trickle of a river after a dry spell, but soon the flood arrived and her breasts ballooned rapidly beneath her buttoned, flannel shirt.

CREEEEEEAK

Immediately the buttons began to protest the sudden growth that was forming underneath them, with tit flesh bubbling from beneath the gaps as they strained to get free. Tough fabric was pulled taught over the rounded shape of two growing udders.

“NNngh” Juniper moaned. Her body alive with ecstasy. Her legs gyrated and slid across the red rug on the floor as she convulsed. “Ah... Abi!”

“I'm here! I'm here,” Abigail could only stare from behind as the masses steadily became more visible to even her viewpoint. Bereft of space to grow up, they now pulsed larger and larger to the sides like a volcano about to erupt.

“I... help!” Juniper arced her chest again, bringing another chorus of straining fabric.

CREEEEEEEEEEEEEEAK

“Tiiight!”

Understanding her need, Abigail reached around and grasped the buttons of the straining shirt. Her fingers fumbling around as the mass of Juniper's breasts pushed back against her arms as they encircled them.

“Just a bit moore...” Abigail growled as her fingers did their work.

One button freed itself. Tit flesh bubbled to fill the opening.

“AHH!” Juniper screamed.

BANG

One was apparently enough. The chain reaction had begun.

BANG BANG

One by one buttons failed in their duty and snapped free. Flying across the room like bullets from a revolver. With each loss more of Juniper's tits spilled free until finally.

CREEEEEEAK-BANG

The final button bounced across the floor.

“Ahh hhaaah...” Juniper panted. “Is it... over?”

As she breathed, she became more aware of a new weight on her front. Adorning her chest was two breasts that bordered on making a cow jealous. Now much more than the moderate handfuls she once possessed, Juniper reached up and pressed into them to find her hands sinking into the depths beyond her sight. Her fingers vanishing into their soft, pillowy mass. The sensation allowed reality to finally settle itself in once more. Juniper moved her weight off Abigail and stood slowly. Stumbling as she moved with an unfamiliar form.

Her mouth open and closed several times as she finally had the focus to take herself in. "I... I'm."

Abigail was privy to a sight of Juniper's body in its entirety. Now illuminated in the soft light of the doorway. Her once shapely hourglass proportions were now more of a plump pear. She wondered inwardly if she could even reach her arms around her lower half and still be able to touch her fingers.

As her eyes swept up to her face, she shook herself free of her reverie. "Juniper? Juni? It'll be okay."

"How can you say that?" Juniper practically whispered. "Look at me! How can I even stand in front of anyone... My family?!"

Abigail shrugged. "I mean... You're in front of me, and I think you're as beautiful as ever."

Juniper's emotions were a whirl. "You can't mean that..."

Rising to her feet, Abigail crossed the floor and pulled Juniper's hands into hers. "I do mean it! You are beautiful, and are still you. Just... well... more of you!"

Juniper sniffled, and then chuckled. "Y-you r-really have no way with words... You know that?" Like a sunbeam through a misty morning, she felt a small sense of relief in the midst of all her doubt and confusion.

"Yeah I know. I'll work on it." Abigail leaned up and kissed Juniper affectionately. "Did it help you calm down though?"

"Yes... At least a little." Juniper wiped her eyes and looked down at herself again. "Just what did they do to us."

"I still say it was the chocolate," Abigail huffed.

Juniper huffed. "Abi, really?"

"I mean it! Look, I just took a sip of the stuff and it just gave me a body that finally allows someone to identify as a woman from far away," Abigail smacked her new shapely thighs appreciatively. "You on the other hand..."

"Drank two full cups..." Juniper muttered as the connection became impossible to refute.

“I bet they cooked all that spicy stuff to make us *want* to drink the swill, varmints.” Abigail was getting angry now as her mind grappled with possibilities.

“But why?” Juniper said. “Maybe this is just some kind of... mistake? Or culture?”

“Don’t know and don’t care enough to find out,” Abigail huffed. “If this is *culture*, I don’t appreciate it one bit.”

“Then... What should we do?” Juniper asked.

“It’s a no brainer.” She leaned in close and nodded to the doorway. The two guards hadn’t shifted an inch for the whole meal or the spectacle afterwards. Her voice dropped to a whisper. “We get out before they make us too big to fit through doors. Just got to deal with them, then we can poke around the area.”

“Why?” Juniper sighed. “Abi, is this still about the gold?”

“No!” Abigail stomped as if quashing the notion forcefully. “That idea went and died the minute your thighs burst out of your jeans.” It was Abigail’s turn to sigh. “Which is really all my fault. Got so excited that one of my schemes finally got something worthwhile at the final hour.”

“It’s not all your fault.” Juniper was now busy rummaging around for a suitable cover for her lower half. Yanking out a red rug from under the cushions she began tearing it until she could wrap it around her waist. “I went along with it all the same.”

“Only because I kept pushing! You’re always the smarter one between us, Juni.” Marching back to the table, Abigail hefted the jug thought it felt solid enough for one good wallop. “Point is, I’m not doing this for gold no more. I’m ready to ditch this freaky culture with just the clothes on my back if we have to. We need to find my packs, because I don’t trust them to bring our stuff back to us.”

Juniper, now equipped with a small amount of modesty in a makeshift skirt that encircled her now shapely behind like a tent, picked up one of the cups for the same reason. “I still don’t see why. Wouldn’t it be better to just run?”

“Sure it would! Three big problems though.”

“What’s that?”

“One, I didn’t see any other caves or tunnels in here to escape from. So, leads me to two, those two big wagons you got on your rear need to fit through the tight space we came in through.” Abigail smacked the end of the jug against her palm. “We need to get rid of that rock in the way, and my packs got the punch to do it... Just hope it won’t cause a cave-in.”

She jerked her head at the door again. “But we getting ahead of ourselves. Leave this to me.”

Abigail looked about to rush out the door and brawl when Juniper held up a hand. “Let me try something first.”

Walking with as much practiced grace and dignity as she could with her new enlarged hips, she sauntered out the door as if it were the most natural thing. Ignoring that her hips bounced on the frame as she passed through. Sure enough, two muscley Red-Veils stood outside and both simultaneously spun and blocked her path with their bodies.

“Your Blessed One desires an audience with your Priestess!” Juniper proclaimed. Placing her hands widely on her hips and using her best ‘Mother’ voice. “Look at what your food did to me!”

The guards simply stood. Juniper frowned and moved to step around them, but they moved to obstruct her path like practiced shadows.

Juniper sighed. “Okay, we do it your way.”

Letting out a whoop of excitement Abigail materialized from behind Juniper’s girth and leapt on one of the guards. Latching hold like a stubborn burr she brought the jug down.

Thunk

The Red-Veil crumpled like a sack of potatoes. Their partner stepped back and pulled a sling out of a satchel on her hips. But before they could begin to spin it Juniper fell on them with all the weight she could muster. Which was apparently enough to send the guard sprawling to the ground like they had been rammed by a bull.

Juniper then did the only thing she could think of to capitalize on her adversary’s prone form. With a leap, she landed ass-first onto them. The air audibly whooshed out of the guard’s mouth as the chair-sized rump fell on them. Before the woman could recover fully, they were quickly introduced to same golden jug as their partner.

Thunk

Abigail let out an appreciative whistle as she found a new appreciation for her new golden club. “Can’t tell if I envy her or not. Your new caboosie is a fierce weapon!”

Juniper scowled. “Abi... Let’s get them back inside.” As her ‘skirt’ and hips brushed against the cloth doorway, an idea formed in her head. “And let’s borrow their clothes.”

Abigail grinned. “I like your thinking! We got the shape now... Well least *you* do.”

“I just wish they had more *clothes* to speak of,” Juniper groaned as she took in the meagre strap and waistband that constituted their uniforms.

“Beggars can’t be choosers.” Abigail was already setting about making a makeshift set of bindings out of the more strips of cloth. “Unless you want to scuffle with each and everyone of them we come across.”

“I hate that you are right.” Juniper clicked her tongue in annoyance and reluctantly started undressing one of the guards minimal attire. Sliding off their waistband and cloth showed they wore little else underneath. “But one thing.”

“What?” Abigail said.

“I don’t want to hear anymore about my butt or you’re going to get it,” Juniper growled as she pulled off the headdress. Finally being able to look at their face in full, a frown descended on her features as she looked upon a set of recognisable features. “I thought they’d look more... foreign?”

Abigail glanced at the face while she was busily tying her guard up. “Yeah... now that you mention it. She looks she’d be right at home walking into a saloon anywhere out here.” She yanked off the headdress of her charge. “Same with this one.”

“It’s strange isn’t it.”

With a shrug, Abigail finished and started pulling off her clothes. “Sure is. But don’t change nothing.”

Juniper pursed her lips and decided that it was best to ‘chalk it’ as Abigail would say. A few moments later and two new ‘Red-Veils’ emerged from the abode. Juniper fitted the role spectacularly. The red waistband snapped taught around her girthy body like it was tailor made. The red breast band squished her new assets like two soft loaves against her chest. Covering her nipples but exposing abundant tit flesh above and below the cloth. Abigail on the other hand needed to roll her own clothes a few times to fit around her enhanced, but largely regular size.

Resisting the urge to lift the cloth covering her face to get a better look, Abigail scanned the area. “Y’know, ignoring that I am looking a gift horse in the mouth but, why is this place so dead? Where is everyone?”

Juniper looked about and saw no sign of Metzli, Red-veils or even regular people. “Another question is where would they even take our things?”

“Well, was hoping to find someone who actually talks and entice them to talk more.”

“With a jug?” Juniper snorted.

Abigail gave a sheepish look. “Didn’t say it was a good plan. Plan B though was just to go for the biggest, most important looking place they got.” She pointed at the large staired structure in the middle. “She did say they needed to be washed or something.”

“Cleansed,” Juniper corrected. “I guess that is an important looking place as any.”

GOOONG

A large hollow metallic sound echoed throughout the cavern. As if sensing their intentions the large stone temple lit up like a bonfire. From a distance they could see the red-clothed figures darting about the levels quickly lighting sconces dotting each level

of the massive structure. The bright flames contrasting the dim blue atmosphere that pervaded the surroundings.

A familiar white clothed figure stood at the summit. Arms gesturing feverishly at the Red-Veils scurrying about below.

“They are getting ready for something.” Juniper observed.

“Well, hope it keeps them busy. Come on.”

The pair crept through the shadowed gaps between the stone settlement towards their objective. Juniper cursing quietly at having to turn sideways through several narrow alleys. Her ballooned proportions having to slide through painstakingly slowly as she pushed down the fear of becoming stuck. She let out a shiver as her bare skin touched the stone walls of some of the houses. Abigail peered around every corner, jug at the ready, but like as before the area was bereft of any foot traffic.

By the time they had slinked close enough to the temple the Red-Veils were anywhere to be seen, but the red fires they lit still burned. Curiously Juniper could spy steam emitting from small vents cut into the stone. Ahead, single stone doorway was carved into the perimeter.

They knelt staring at the door for a few moments. Scanning for any signs of movement. “Okay, we head in. Keep quiet. Look natural. We run into someone who suspects us, you tackle, I smack them in the head.”

Juniper steeled her nerves and nodded as they moved forward. As they crossed the threshold their noses were assaulted with a smell they recognized.

“It’s that chocolate again. Don’t tell me this is the kitchen.” Abigail whispered.

Juniper shuddered. “I hope not. I don’t want to see another drop for the rest of my days.”

The corridor only went ahead in a single direction with no splits or turns. As they walked, they began to notice beaten black piping slinking across the ceiling and vanishing into gaps in the stonework like a mysterious spiderweb. Gurgling sounds reverberated periodically around them as they neared.

Curious, Juniper reached her hand up close to one of them, only to stop short as an unmistakable heat emanating from the metal. Upon a closer look the metal looked beaten together hastily, rather than wrought. “They are hot...”

“Shh!” Abigail hissed. A corner loomed up ahead. The clattering of small utensils and pouring liquid echoed past them as they drew near.

A peek around the corner revealed a circular kitchen with a bare, dirt floor covered in footprints. The scent of hot chocolate filled the air as several Red-Veils focused on a chain of work stations around the rim. None of the vegetables they had for a meal were present, rather, it was a kitchen dedicated only to the mysterious fruits that grew around

the cavern. A large basket of them sat on one workbench, from which the women busily opened and dumped the glowing seeds and pulp out of into a massive grinding wheel constantly rotated by hand. Powder periodically fell from the wheel into more bowls parked around it, which were then scooped up and mixed with some white liquid from a large vat nearby.

“Can’t be milk could it. Where’s the cows?” Abigail wondered.

The final stop on this work chain was the source of the constant gurgling. A large, black boiler sat in the middle of a web of pipes right in the middle of the room. As they watched, a Red-Veil poured the completed substance into it.

“What is this all for?” Juniper hissed.

Abigail was focused on something else. “No clue. But look over there!”

Sitting beside one of the workbenches in a messy pile were Abigail’s packs, though there was no sign of Abigail’s gun. All were hastily dumped in a corner and seemingly forgotten about. Juniper let out a quiet groan at what they needed to do.

“Just be natural. Walk stiff and don’t talk. Should be easy,” Abigail said with a quiver in her voice.

“And if they recognize us?”

“We improvise.”

Mustering up the courage the pair walked mechanically around the corner side by side. Backs straight and their faces locked forward in their best impression of ‘mindlessly silent machine’ that they could. The workers paid them no attention, which gave Juniper hope, but the kitchen was starting to feel far too big as they approached the bags.

Abigail reached them first and bent to retrieve them.

“So far so good” Juniper thought. She turned around to start walking back.

Only for her enlarged hips to bump into one of the workers. A clay jug of liquid chocolate was sent crashing onto the floor along with the one carrying it, breaking the relative silence of the room like a thunderclap.

“Pardon.” Juniper’s words left her lips before she could hold them. “Ah...”

A room of covered faces all turned simultaneously towards them. Though none ceased their current task.

Abigail grabbed a cutting board nearby and hefted it. “You really got to stop being so darn *polite* all the time, Juni!”

“I can’t help my upbringing!” Juniper found herself a rolling pin and brandished it like a sword. The Red-Veil Juniper had bumped into began to get back to their feet. Juniper readied her improvised weapon to strike.

“Ah hell, jug’s dusted,” said the Red Veil.

Juniper very nearly dropped the rolling pin. The rest of the Red-Veils still continued their work as if nothing had occurred, but weirdly their covered faces remained faced towards them independent of their actions.

“Oh, you gonna get it later!” cried another working on rotating the grinding wheel.

The first tossed her head back annoyance. “Oh shut it! Wasn’t my damned fault.”

“Like White-Bitch is gonna care,” said one more, this one busy mixing the powder with the milk.

Abigail and Juniper both stared as if everyone had sprouted bull horns. The one they knocked down turned their head back towards them. “So, you got the better of Edna and Polly huh? They still above snakes?”

“Ain’t you gonna attack us? Truss us up like before?” Abigail asked, cutting board still raised like a shield.

They shook their head. “Not right now. Our orders are to prep the sho-ko-LAH-tl, or however White-Bitch calls it.”

“Just call it *chocolate* Brynn!”

“Whatever!” The one called Brynn growled. “Either way, since you smashed the one jug we had down here, and there ain’t another available, I can’t do my job. So now I’m stuck till I get another order. Them’s the rules of whatever this voodoo is. One command only, just so you know, greenhorn.”

Juniper lowered her rolling pin a little. “W-what are you talking about? Aren’t you Children of Coyo-yo-something...”

“Coyolxāuhqui” The room replied in unison.

“You have *no* idea how much we were forced to practice that.” Brynn shook their head. “But hell naw! We ain’t *children* of anybody but our Ma’s and Pa’s. And White-Bitch isn’t *Metzli* either! Her real name is Tess.”

“Tess!?” Abigail squeaked. “It wouldn’t be Gold Dog Tess?!”

That brought a chuckle from Brynn. “Very same! We the Gold Dog Bandits! Or least we were.” She turned her covered face up to the ceiling in thought. “How many years has it been anyhow?”

“Forty years...” Abigail said quietly. Unbidden, she reached out and flipped the red cloth away from Brynn’s face. Like the two guards they knocked out, the woman standing there had very common features for the West. Brown hair, blue eyes and pale white skin. More amazingly, she looked the same age as them.

Brynn's eyes were wide. "Forty bleeding years. Huh, you do lose track of time with no sun."

"How..." Juniper muttered.

"Only White-Bitch really knows the voodoo behind it," Brynn spat on the floor in disgust. "But I had to pin it to something it'd be the gold. It's what started this whole mess."

Abigail had lowered her chosen weapon completely now. "The same gold from the failed train robbery?"

"We didn't fail that!" shouted a Red-Veil.

Brynn nodded. "Sure didn't! We boarded the train from horseback. Took control of the engine. Stopped it dead in the tunnel here right as planned and whole gang was above snakes! Not a bullet fired." She laughed as she reminisced, but then a frown descended. "Then Tess had to check the loot."

This brought a collective groan from the group.

"There we were. Opening the crates to inspect the goods. All our eyes aflutter from all the jewellery." Brynn nodded at the bangle on Juniper's wrist. "We all tried on some. Never wore gold before. Tess grabbed the biggest and fanciest bunch to wear."

Juniper, her worry growing from the story, tried to slip off the bangle off her wrist. Her hands encircled it and pulled, but to her alarm the gold sat tight. Seemingly unable to even fit over her own wrist despite slipping so easily on before.

Brynn merely nodded sadly. "Yeep, that's the look we had too. Then there was this blue flash, and the Tess we knew stopped, and 'Metztli' started. She spoke a word and suddenly our bodies were her puppets."

Juniper kept tugging the bracelet, but it might as well have been her skin. "I can't get it off!"

"But I got mine off..." Abigail glanced down at her bare wrist as she joined Juniper in trying to pull hers off.

Brynn sneered. "Well ain't you *lucky*. Must've been blessed with some thin wrists."

"Nngh! H-how... What is all this for?" Juniper panted.

"Beats me!" Brynn made an exasperated expression. "We just were instructed to work and shut up. Big emphasis on the last part. Forced us carve this place out. Forced us to scavenge the train for metal to cobble this contraption together and everything else. Forced us to drink this bean swill and plump our bodies up to her liking," she said, looking around this way and that. "Thing is, during all that I never seen White-Bitch so excited before. Something is going down soon, so if I were you I'd hightail it 'fore..."

"There you are!" cried a voice.

Brynn's eyes widened and her mouth clamped shut.

Metztli had appeared from around the door. "To think this is where you were! I went to retrieve you for the ceremony, but you were gone! And the guards I left tied up! I fretted so, so much, haha!"

"I...ah" Juniper mouthed.

Metztli entered the kitchen, her golden accessories chattering. Barging through any Red-Veil that crossed her path as if they didn't exist. "I was afraid you were lost. But couldn't fathom why? Why would the Blessed One leave?!" Her voice became more and more frantic. "Why, after so long, would the *BLESSED ONE LEAVE?!?*"

"It was YOU! Wasn't it!" She pointed her scepter at Abigail. "You filthy *Coyote!* You corrupted her! You made her want to leave! You, who was not spoken of in the prophecies!"

Abigail glared back. "So what if it was?! You gave us that poison and made Juniper bloat up like a cow in the sun!"

"DO NOT SPEAK OF THE XOCOLATL THAT WAY! IT IS OF THE GODS!" Metztli shrieked.

Juniper stood in front of Abigail. "She's right! I didn't ask for this, nor did Abigail!"

Metztli turned to Juniper. Her hands clasped together. "Please, Blessed One, forgive me for not recognizing the threat when we first met, so overjoyed I was at your arrival I was blind! You mustn't let her words corrupt your purpose! This is all as it was ordained! Do you not *feel* the time approaching?!"

Abigail growled. "The hell my words did any..."

"You WILL be silent!" Metztli commanded and waved her sceptre.

"The hell I will!" Abigail replied.

Metztli stopped in her tracks. Her head tilted as if confused. "You removed the bracelet? Of course you did. Such *vile things* as you are not meant to carry the blessing of the Coyolxāuhqui!" She raised her scepter tall. "Everyone, you *will* stop!"

The room finally fell fully silent as the Red-Veils, the Gold Dog gang, froze in their place.

"Huh..." Juniper whispered. She found that all control of her lower body was no longer hers. Unbidden, her back straightened and her legs planted themselves apart. The bracelet felt all the tighter around her wrist.

"I... I can't move!?" Juniper shouted.

"I'm truly sorry, Blessed One," Metztli bowed low. "But dawn comes. The ceremony cannot wait for the Coyote's corruption to leave you. We must be away!" She beckoned

and pointed out the door. “You *will* head up to the summit of the temple! There is attire prepared and ready!”

Juniper’s body lurched, and she found herself walking towards the exit. “Ugh! You... Stop! Abi, I can’t stop!”

Abigail was already running across the kitchen towards Metztlí. Her cutting board raised.

Metztlí merely waved her scepter. “Sisters, you *will* deal with the *Coyote*. The dawn comes, and so the prophecy will be fulfilled!”

Utensils and bowls were dropped unceremoniously and Abigail’s path was suddenly blocked by the group of women. Abigail desperately threw her cutting board, which harmlessly whizzed by Metztlí’s veiled face. “Varmint! You let Juni go or you are gonna regret it!”

“Abi! Ugh... Damnit! Metztlí stop this!” Juniper cried as her body marched out of the kitchen.

Not paying her anymore mind, Metztlí marched after Juniper. Humming happily as she went.

“Sorry about this,” Brynn said, defeated. Her veil had flopped back down in front of her face. “You’d have made a good Gold Dog, what’s your name?”

Abigail backed up. She counted five women who dwarfed her in numbers and size. They slowly converged towards her. Her mind raced. She wanted nothing more to speed after Juniper before Metztlí did anymore weird voodoo, but faced with a wall of curvy flesh she knew simply running wouldn’t accomplish much.

But she *will* get through. “My name is Abigail. Abigail Briggs. The girl who the devil runs from when she has a plan!” Her eyes flicked about the room for a notion of said plan, and failed to find it.

“*Goddamn it, think,*” she thought as she backed up another step as the wall of women closed in. Panicking, she readied to try and make a break for a small gap in their number when her foot slipped. Mud formed from the earlier spill took her balance from her, and she toppled to the floor.

The mass of women fell on her simultaneously. Abigail scrambled on hands and feet to fling herself underneath a workbench. Hands reached for her as she continued to crawl as fast as she could until she emerged from underneath the table. Right next to the vat of milk. It was a battered together tub larger than she was. Seeing a gap, she slid between the wall and the vat. Bracing her back against the cool, black metal she inched herself higher and out of reach.

“So that other woman your sister or something?” said Brynn.

“Can you *please* not start a casual conversation right now?” Abigail growled from between her teeth as she slowly reached the top. “I’m trying to think!”

The group of women tried to squeeze into the same gap and reach her, but their abundant bodies prevented them from getting any closer. “Aww come on. First new face in years. Want to remember some details before you can’t talk no more.”

“Whose side are you on!?” Abigail shouted.

“I’m one of them realists, is all.” Brynn replied. “Would be nice if you managed to beat Metzli, but there are five of us and one of you. Don’t like them odds.”

“Ugh!” Abigail sighed. But with a bit of breathing room, she allowed herself to weight her options. She glanced down at the group. Their bodies were still trying in vain to get to her. But that was little solace, as she needed to get out the door and to wallop Metzli in the head. However, there was little doubt Brynn’s group would give chase and there was no way to avoid them in the long, thin corridor leading out. But all she had was her clothes and muddy feet.

It was then an idea dawned on her. A stupid one, but she admitted so were most that came out of her head. Braced at the top of the vat, she planted her feet tightly against the wall and shoved.

Grrnnnnrrnnrrnnnn!

Brynn was the first to notice as the container shifted. “Hey, hey now. I know you desperate and all, but that took a *lot* of work to fill.”

“Unfair odds remember?” Abigail replied with a smile as she felt the vat start to tip. “So let me tell *you* something. I fight dirty!”

“Aw hell,” Brynn sighed as the vat was finally seized by gravity and toppled towards them.

“Yeeeeehaawww!” Abigail, cackling madly, grabbed hold of the vat as it fell and rode it on the way down.

The Red-Veils scrambled to move out of the way as the vat crashed into the dirt. Hard-squeezed milk splashed messily across the entire floor of the kitchen in a wave. Precious fluid splashed into onto the sizzling hot boiler and immediately erupted into a blast of steam that quickly enclosed everyone in a hot, white fog.

“You rat! I still got chaffing from the last time.” One woman shouted.

“Lands Sakes, she’s crazy!” Brynn muttered.

A Red-Veil to her side suddenly shouted in surprise before being silenced by a round of coughing. Swiftly followed by another. The steam began to settle and visibility returned. The floor was now a thick, dirty slurry of mud, and two of the Red-Veils were down. Their faces covered in a fine powder.

GUUUURGLE!

A rumble from their bodies and they immediately began to bloat. Their already wide proportions swelling further as they struggled to fulfill their command. But with thundering pulses their asses swelled from pillows to bouncing, meaty cushions that their owners fought to balance on the slippery footing.

“That’s two!” Abigail’s voice came from behind Brynn. She turned too slowly to dodge the kick that swept her feet off the floor. The ceiling flew into view as her back fell into the mud. Soon after, a bowl was unceremoniously dropped onto her face. Her tongue erupted in bitterness as the powder coated the inside of her mouth. A taste Brynn was well acquainted with.

“You... This is the pure stuff!?” Brynn coughed as the bowl fell off. “Ah hell... You have no idea how...Mmph!”

GUUUUUURGLE

Abigail was already grabbing another chocolate powder filled bowl from near the grinding wheel. Her cover of steam now long gone, the two remaining Red-Veils still standing leapt over their expanding comrades and rushed towards her.

Tensing her legs, Abigail leapt towards the pair. The sudden movement catching them off guard as they struggled to halt their momentum in the sloughy ground. Flinging her legs forward she dropped into a muddy slide that barrelled underneath the pair and knocked their feet from under them. Two heavy, muddy splashes joined the rest as Abigail clawed her way on top of one of the women. Yanking their veil off and stuffing their face into the bowl.

GUUUUUURGLE

Using the fallen, and now growing, woman as a springboard Abigail rushed to get back to the grinding wheel to get one more bowl. The one remaining Red-Veil was faster, however. A hand shooting out and snapping around Abigail’s foot before she could leap. Her tongue tasted milky, wet mud as she flopped face first into the ground.

“Pleh! Gah!” Abigail coughed. “God that’s foul.”

The last Red-Veil growled. “You know how long it takes for these hips to go down?! *I’ll* be saddled with all the work while these addle-heads will be busy greasing themselves just to pass through a damned door!”

“So...mghh! Sorry for you!” Abigail said sarcastically and started crawling with everything she had. Dragging them both towards the grinding wheel as the Red-Veil pulled herself closer. The heavier weight of the bandit slowly dragging both of them further into the mud.

“Oh you lucky I ain’t in control of my body, or I’d shut that dirty mouth up first!”

Abigail forced herself to ignore her as she drew close to the last bowl. Stretching her arm out she reached desperately until her fingers closed around the rim. Bringing the bowl down she twisted herself to face her unwanted passenger. The Red-Veil's facial cover still hung down and obscured their mouth. She reached to pull the obstruction off, but was intercepted as the woman shifted and caught her arm as it reached out. Her curvaceous body soon pinned Abigail fully underneath her.

"Oh... Guh... You are *heavy!*" Abigail grunted. Feeling the weight slowly push the air out of her lungs. Needing to keep one hand on the bowl she kicked and shoved to no avail. The Red-Veils free hand reached for her neck.

"Well, shit." Abigail hissed as she realized what she had to do.

"Looks like it's end of the line fo..." The Red-Veil began. At that moment Abigail upturning the bowl she had been holding and let the powder fall directly on her own face. Dropping the empty crockery, she snagged the veil from her opponents face and yanked it clean off. The woman only had a moment of surprise to register across her face as Abigail blew out the breath she had been holding. Sending an eruption of chocolate powder directly into their mouth.

"Hck! Gaahah! Oh you low-down varmint scheming... mmh!"

GUUUUURGLE

Abigail frantically tried to remove the powder from her face, but she could already taste the tell-tale bitterness that she despised on her tongue.

"Damn it," Abigail muttered. Unlike her small sip, she had took a direct dose of the mysterious substance. Deep within her core, she felt a surge of energy erupt from her stomach.

GUUUUUUUURGLE

GRRRRRRN

The internal rumble resounded from both women as their curves began to shift. The concentrated powder worked its magic much faster than the drink. Her mind flew into a haze as the energy took hold. Her ass fattened and bloated like she had never ran a day in her life while feasting on the greatest of delicacies. Full cheeks pushed against the waistband and forced the fabric to shrink around her ever growing waist.

That wasn't her main concern however. The woman pinning her down moaned loudly as her already girthy figure shook and swelled. With every pulse of growth, the weight increased, and Abigail felt herself being sunk into the mud like she was being sat on by a cow.

"G-get off!" Abigail squirmed. Feeling her legs lose feeling as she felt like she was being sat on by an anvil. She yanked her hand free of the woman's grip; their mind lost on other sensations to care. Bracing hard on their shoulders Abigail pushed.

GUUUUUURGLE!

Another surge, and her thighs began to fill. The pressure from being laid on increased like someone was shaking a champagne bottle as both women's bodies fought for growth. Her body slowly slid from underneath the ballooning woman until her legs finally shot free like a cork erupting. She slid across the muddy floor until she smacked into the nearby wall. Scrambling to her feet, she wobbled precariously on a lower body that was no longer her own. Taking careful steps, she collected their packs and then focused on navigating a room steadily filling with a chorus of bubbling, overinflating ass-cheeks, and thighs.

GUUUUUURGLE

CREEEEEEEEEAK

Her waist band protested as another bout of growth surged into her rear. Holding onto a nearby workbench behind her, she slid herself closer to the exit even as her butt threatened to push her off the tables. The cold sensation of the stone sent shivers down her spine as the flesh of her rear slid over their rough surfaces.

CREEEEEEEEEAK- SNAP

SNAP!

Abigail jumped, but the sound wasn't from her. Looking back her eyes widened the waistbands of two Red-Veils exploded off their forms. Rumps the size of carriage sofas bounced and shook as the women still struggled to regain their footing. Their eyes locked coldly on Abigail as she neared the exit.

CRRRRRRREEEAK

Ahead of her, Brynn had managed to get to her feet too. Her clothing holding on for dear life as she braced herself against a wall near the door. Her own rear nearing the size of her comrades as she prepared herself to lunge.

CREEEEEEEEEEEEEAK- BAMPH!

Like a gunshot signalling the sound of a horse race, Brynn's waist band blew off her as the woman leaned forward and leapt. Thankful her body hadn't grown too large, Abigail braced against of the table she had been sliding along and kicked upwards. Her legs went high just as Brynn's swelling body fell short onto the mud underneath.

"Sorry about this', right?" Abigail said as she planted her bare, muddy feet on two sofa sized ass cheeks and bounced herself to the doorway. Brynn and two other Red-Veils had ceased trying to stand and were now crawling through the mud towards her. Abigail backed up into the narrow corridor as they neared to watch the results of her handiwork take hold.

GUUUUUUUUUUURGLE

Brynn was the first to pass the threshold, only for her posterior to become wedged in the frame as one final surge of growth took hold. The bandits butt swelled and filled the stone doorway like a dam being built before her eyes. The two other Red-Veils attempted to squeeze themselves past only to add to the mass of flesh.

“Well shoot. You *are* crazy” Brynn couldn’t help but laugh as her body couldn’t advance any further. “Crazier than even Tess herself!”

“Don’t know if that’s a compliment, but I’ll take it!” Abigail replied.

“Hey, Abigail was it? Think you’ll take her down?”

Abigail stopped before turning the corner into the corridor. “Not even a question. She’s got my greatest treasure. The Devil Himself wouldn’t be able to stop me getting to her.”

“Ahah... Good luck!” Brynn let out a laugh as Abigail turned and started running. She ran as hard as she dared. The corridor feeling far longer than before as she reached the stairs that led upwards.

GUUUURGLE

“Ugh, stupid bleeding fancy chocolate” Abigail groaned as she felt another surge rippled through her. She could feel the skin of her hindquarters bloat around the meagre cloth encircling her waist. “Don’t you *dare* get me stuck in here.” She warned.

GUUUUUUUUURRGLE

As if out of spite, her thighs rumbled and exploded outwards. Becoming thickened pillars that brushed the harsh stone walls of the temple as she hurried. The thin corridor feeling thinner by the moment.

Abigail hissed through clenched teeth. “Hold on Juni. I’m coming!”

Juniper was prisoner to her own body as it marched up the stairs on its own accord. The experience was so unusual and horrifying she paid little attention to the frantic chanting of Metztli who marched just behind her as they both ascended the stairway to the summit of the temple. No matter how much she willed it, her body might as well have been a horse whose reins were being pulled by someone else. It followed the directions of its white-veiled master dutifully as they finally reached the final stair to alight on relatively small square that sat at the very top.

The stone figure they had barely seen from down below now stood above her. A statue of a goddess with such bountiful curves they made Juniper’s heart skip a beat. Hips that put even a fertility goddess statue to shame hoisted a rear-end so plush it could fill a

carriage sofa on its own. The statue's hands cupped an enormous dish that held her full, bulging breasts so large they spilled across the sides.

“Radiant is She not? Our beloved Goddess Coyolxāuhqui. Struck down by her brother, Huitzilopochtli, on the eve of her triumph, but she lives on still. Every night her gaze watches over us, only to hide when the accursed sibling raises his face in the dawn,” Metztli was transfixed upon the statue she barely paid Juniper any attention as she waved her sceptre. “Now, you *will* don the ceremonial garb, Blessed One. The dawn comes, and we must be ready!”

Juniper could only watch as she walked herself to a stone table laying below the statue. A sheer white dress lay upon its rough-hewn surface. The thin cloth already weighed down with glittering gold chains criss-crossing across its length.

“What is this all for?!” Juniper shouted as her clothes were removed unwillingly, and the white garb slowly slid itself over her body. “What are you going to do?”

“Me?” Metztli turned to her. “*I will do my duty!*” She threw her arms wide. “One that I have followed ever since I returned and filled this accursed body so many moons ago! Guided by the sacred gold, I will fulfill my purpose!”

As the dress covered her, Juniper became more aware of the chains that wrapped around the garment. They slid coldly across her enlarged hips and soon draped across her whole body.

“Beautiful!” Metztli exclaimed. “Now lay yourself below Her radiance, quickly!”

Her body silently obeyed, and her skin felt the chill of the cold stone table as it rested upon it. The statue's plate loomed above her head and cast a shadow upon her face.

The white-veiled priestess began to chant. “Oh Coyolxāuhqui, swift in the sky. You who makes the seas and tides tremble with your gaze! I, your servant, call to you now!”

Juniper's heart pounded in her ears. Something felt *wrong*. More so than anything she had felt until now. Her eyes darted around everywhere. Desperate to see *what* was coming.

“The Blessed One has been found!” Metztli began to scurry around Juniper. The chains were pulled and snapped taut to hooks carved into the stone. “Your vessel awaits you!”

“Wait, vessel?! I am *not* anyone's vessel you crazy bitch!” Juniper screamed.

Metztli didn't seem to hear her as she continued to circle. A soft *snick* of a hidden mechanism was touched.

GUUUUURGLE

Juniper's eyes widened. The sound emanated from the statue above her. She felt the table beneath her back rumble as the clattering of hastily cobbled together piping beneath surged to life.

Drip Drip

To her surprise, melted chocolate soon dribbled from the statue's plate. Droplets that soon grew into a steady stream of the frothy liquid.

Metztli's voice grew feverish as the first drop. "Through the xocolatl may you find your vessel worthy! Through the gold of our people, the wronged and the forgotten, find her now!"

Juniper clenched her mouth shut as one of the streams began to fall towards her.

"YOU *WILL* DRINK!" Metztli screeched.

Unable to resist her mouth opened itself to receive. Her tongue erupted in bitterness the chocolate landed inside, and her body began to drink. Juniper willed her body to fight. To cough it up. Anything but guzzle it down.

GUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUURGLE

This time the rumble came from within her body. She felt the tell-tale tingling from their meal arrive once more with more intensity.

SHOOOOOOMP!

"MMMHP!" Juniper moaned. Rather than the steady growth from before, her body bloated in sudden pulses that shook her to her core. The magic of the chocolate, hot and wild, surged into her body and yearned to fill it to the brim. Her rear-end bounced off the stone as her ass cheeks bloated and swelled with violent force. Bloating from watermelons to the size of seat cushions and spilling from the meagre table.

"Kck...ack!" Juniper desperately tried to spit the liquid out. "S-st-brbrb-op!"

"The vessel fills! Find her now! Shine your darkness down upon us!"

GUUUUUUUURGLE!

Juniper's thighs shook and trembled as they engorged themselves on the mysterious energy, rounding themselves. Joining her posterior in shaping her lower body into a thick, bulging expression of the female form.

"Find her now!" Metztli shouted louder. Suddenly a crack split in the ceiling of the cavern. An enormous gush of fresh air rushed through the hollow space.

"Mmhp! Wha-phgt the hell!" Juniper managed to gasp between gulps.

Metztli fell to her knees. "AHAHAHA SHE SEES!"

Another click from a hidden switch beneath the stones and the chocolate stream stopped flowing.

Metztli turned and watched Juniper's growth with intense scrutiny. "The chains must bind, but not break! Oh Blessed One, had the *Coyote* not poisoned your mind, you could

have savoured the power of the xocolatl.” The white-veil sagged. “I feel sorrow for you.”

“Take my place... Ahn!” Juniper’s body shook even as she spoke. “If you feel... sorry!”

“Alas, I am unworthy,” Metztlitli turned back to face the opening in the mountain and threw her arms towards it.

Juniper could feel the energy begin to pool within her. Like a vicious flood building and preparing to break the dam. Her body ballooned as it struggled to contain it. Her ass swelled to the size of carriage sofas until the golden chains snapped taut across her cheeks. Still, the power built.

“Look upon her! Your humble servants offering to you! Fill her with your essence!”

GUUUUUUUUUUUUUUURGLE!

The energy in her body shot upwards. Juniper’s tits jolted and swelled. No longer merely growing, but *filling*. Rounding into domes upon her body as they worked to hold back the tide of milk filling them. The white garment slid up her enormous thighs to accommodate her bloating chest. The golden chains beginning to dig into stretching skin.

“GOLD GUIDE YOU. RETURN TO US!” Metztlitli cried. Jubilation filled her voice.

CRRK CRRRK CRACK!

To Juniper’s horror the divide on the cave ceiling high above widened. Loose stones the size of horses fell wildly around the settlement, but miraculously did not cause any destruction. As if a divine hand guided them to land around the buildings like a hard rain.

“GOLD GUIDE YOU. RETURN TO US!”

The crack split the cave from top to bottom. Like an egg being pulled open by a pair of giant hands the dome opened into the outside world. A gap, rent into the very side of then mountain, emerged in a horrid display of power. From this opening the light of a dawn lit the cave in amber light.

CRK CRK CRK KKK

The golden chains protested loudly as Juniper’s growth pushed against the bindings.

“RETURN...”

HISSSSSSSSS

The chanting died on Metztlitli’s lips as both women bore witness to a stick of dynamite sailing over their heads and landing next to the feet of the statue.

Confusion was replaced quickly with abject horror. “NOO! NOOO!” Metzli shrieked as she dove for the explosive. Her hands grasped the tube and flung it off the side of the temple in a hurry.

The priestess watched it sail into the settlement below and waited for the inevitable explosion, which never came. But the distraction gave Abigail plenty of time to sprint from the stairs behind her and plant two feet into her back.

Abigail shouted. “You scheming, poisonous, love stealing rattlesnake BITCH!”

“Hck!” Metzli coughed as she fell to the stone and rolled across the platform before slipping out of sight onto one of the tiers below.

“A-Abi!” Juniper cried. Tears forming in her eyes. Abigail looked like she had been through a muddy hell. The only items she carried was just their packs. Her clothes long since bursting off her body somewhere below. Her body had swollen into a perfect short-stack of a woman. Hips far wider than her shoulders sat below tits larger than her head. Two enormous tear-drops of ass cheeks drooped and bounced as she heaved from exertion.

To Juniper though, nothing mattered more than seeing the Abigail’s wicked grin.

“Juni! Hah... I’m here. Sorry, they got way too many... hah.. stairs.” Abigail scurried to her feet and immediately set upon trying to remove the chains. “Just a... hah, sec. I’ll get you lose!”

“You have *no* idea how glad I am to see you!” Juniper forced herself to focus. “But... honestly Abi, dynamite?”

“I removed the blasting cap!” Abigail still tugged the chains to no avail. “Didn’t have much time to think of alternatives on account of... that” She pointed her finger at the enormous new opening in the mountain. “Didn’t want to see whatever hoodoo she had going finish.”

“It... IS... finished...”

Metzli had clawed her way back to the precipice. She pointed a shaking finger towards the crack in the mountain.

Both Juniper’s and Abigail’s eyes widened as they beheld the sight. The dawn was fading. It was as if the sun was being consumed and replaced by a violet haze. The cavern around them rumbled as an unworldly power began to awaken.

“She comes! She comes to us!” Metzli cackled even as she lay on the floor. “Guided by gold she will walk the earth once more and my people will be avenged! Finally!!”

Juniper’s body suddenly jolted. Magic took hold of her body and she felt a sense of weightlessness as her body slowly lifted itself off the stone until the chains below jerked and held her down. The eerie, unnatural sun became all she could focus on. She felt an

unnatural heat from the golden bindings around her. Her blonde hair shimmered and began to fade to a dull, white.

“No, no no no no. Juni!” Abigail quailed. The sure-fire confidence that in her eyes slowly descending into panic. They darted between the chains, the sun, and the love her life.

They snapped to Metztli. “How do you stop this?!”

The possessed woman cackled. “You can’t!”

Juniper tried to think. But the strange light was so all encompassing. She wanted to yield to it.

“Juniper!” Abigail’s voice cut through the delirium, snapping her thoughts to the present. The chains dug into her skin painfully. They glowed in the violet haze that shone upon them.

“Abi...” Juniper said.

“I don’t know what to do!” Abigail shouted.

“The chains...”

“Yeah! I’ve been trying to get them off!”

“Make *me* break them...”

A frown descended on Abigail’s features. “What do you mean?!”

“You did say you’d love me no matter how I looked, right?”

Abigail looked up at Juniper’s face, who still stared at the violet sun. “Make me huge...”

“Huge, but the chocolate...” There was a moment of confusion on Abigail’s face, before comprehension dawned. Moving into motion she reached into her satchel and pulled out her canteen. “Probably couldn’t sell this swill anyhow!”

BANG

A gunshot cracked through the chaos. A hole emerged from the bottom of the canteen and precious melted chocolate began to spill onto the stone below.

“Forgive me for using the demon’s tools.” Metztli, holding Abigail’s revolver in one outstretched hand, cackled madly as she fired two more shots that flew but missed their mark.

Abigail, swearing, ducked behind the cover of the statue and thought quickly. Bringing the new hole in her canteen to her lips she filled the contents of her mouth with the liquid.

Metztli held the pistol up and focused. Waiting for Abigail to emerge. “490 moons in this accused body! SHE will bring back our civilisation! Our homes. Our spirits!

Everything that was taken from us! I WILL NOT ALLOW SOME FILTHY COYOTE TO HINDER US!”

Juniper’s hair had completely turned white. The golden chains glowed with mythical fire. She could feel her mind sinking further. “Abi...”

A flicker of movement. Metzli took aim.

BANG BANG!

The bullets flew and hit their target, but it was only one of Abigail’s satchels. The woman emerged from her hiding spot and leapt onto the table. Bringing her face close to her floating partner.

“No... NO! YOU WILL NOT...” Metzli tried to scramble to her feet. Taking aim she pulled the trigger, but the six-shooter was spent. The two lovers locked lips and Juniper, still ensorcelled by the command given, drank.

GUUUUUUURGLE

As the warm, sweet liquid filled her body, Juniper began to grow again.

CRRRREEEEEAAK

The golden chains, already taut began to groan in protest as her body swelled. Her haunches, already as wide as a carriage, pulsed and stretched. The white dress began to split across its length.

SHRRRRRRRRRRIP

Her bosom heaved. Tit flesh stretched and filled to the size of ripe watermelons. Sweet fluid began to soak into the fabric.

CRRRREEEEEEEEEAAK-BANG

One golden chain gave up the fight as her butt pushed free.

Metzli’s face looked in horror as the violet light began to fade. Juniper’s body began to descend slowly. Her hair began to shine golden at its tips before slowly climbing up along their length.

“Mmph!” Juniper’s mind rose from its near slumber. She felt Abigail’s lips on her own.

CRRRREEEEEEEEEAAK-BANG

BANG BANG

More chains snapped violently across her form. In great, jiggling pushes her ass bloated. Each cheek as wide as a wagon and just as full.

BAMPH

Her dress exploded off her body.

“No, no! You were the Blessed One! This as not how it was written!” Metztli shrieked and sank to her knees before them. Juniper floated down until her feet, gently guided by Abigail, touched the table. A blinding flash of light filled the cavern as the last of the violet curse that had touched the sun vanished. Dawn light shimmered over the lovers as they continued the kiss.

CRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRREAAAK-BAAANG

The last chain broke. Showing the area in glistening metal.

Abigail and Juniper finally parted their lips.

“Said you were a great kisser,” Juniper said.

Abigail blushed. “Aww, shucks.”

Their reverie was interrupted by Metztli shuffling towards them. “How... How could you...?”

Abigail, having had enough, snarled and hopped down. Snatching the priestess’ sceptre from her limp hand she held it up and examined it.

“You know, I think I figured out the trick to your voodoo” She said as she turned to Juniper. “Juni, you *will* use your best weapon to enact frontier justice!”

“Abi? What are you...” Juniper squeaked as her body moved. Taking careful steps she backed up to the edge of the table. Facing her posterior towards the priestess, who merely stared.

Juniper finally understood as her body crouched and leapt. “Oh, you! I told you not to make fun of...”

Two wagon-sized ass cheeks fell. Abigail could have sworn the temple shuddered.

Abigail held the sceptre to the sunlight. “You *will* be free.”

The bracelet that had stuck to Juniper since the ordeal began shimmered and fell uselessly onto the stone floor.

Juniper pouted. “I said not to make fun of my butt, Abi.”

“I didn’t! I gave it the proper respect it deserved,” Abigail laughed and helped her back to her feet, and off Metztli’s groaning form.

“Oh, *thanks*,” Juniper said, but a smile still formed on her lips. She looked down at her enormous body with a solemn face. “But still, what now...”

“Free the Gold Dogs. Maybe even Tess here. Wait till your tush deflates living it up here. Then... head back home. Your home,” Abigail said with a small smile.

Juniper patted her curves experimentally. “This isn’t permanent, and what about the gold?”

Abigail shook her head. “One of the bandits down below told me it takes awhile, and I think I’m done with chasing gold from here on, Juni. I think I need to settle down some.”

A thought popped into Juniper’s head as they started to walk towards the stairs. “You know, they do have a lot of those chocolate seeds, right?”

“Sure do, why? What you thinking?” Abigail asked.

“Well, maybe there is a business opportunity. Less transport and trains, and more... farming and selling.” Juniper drummed her fingers on her hips. “Would require us to live pretty far from the city. Out in the wilds a bit. But if we make it part of the family business then I see no complaints.”

Abigail’s eyes widened and a bright grin crossed over her features.

A new hope in their hearts, both walked down the stairs. The dawn’s light shining upon them.

The End