

### ***Party Member-in-a-Bottle***

The dragon's head struck the dirt with a thump, followed shortly by the rest of its giant body. As it twitched a few final times and went still, Lydia the Elf lowered her bow with a sigh of relief.

"The beast," she said, turning to the Hero, "you've slain it." The man in question stood staring at the corpse with an intense expression, either paying his respects to the great monster he'd slain or perhaps simply figuring out how best to skin it. "No more shall its flames scour our sacred trees."

The Hero turned his solemn gaze to her, and Lydia faltered in the face of such nobility. "Please," she said, falling to one knee, "the elves of Milkwood are forever in your de—"

"Meh," said the Hero, picking his nose. "So, what's my reward for this quest? Is it gold? I could use some more gold."

Lydia blinked. "I-I'm afraid we have no gold to give." With effort, she forced herself back to her feet. "But, please, allow me to accompany you instead. My people can't offer you gold, but at least allow me to offer you my services."

The Hero rolled his entire head and sighed in exasperation. "Are you kidding? *You're* the reward?" He pinched the bridge of his nose. "I don't *need* another party member. Look..." He gestured at the assortment of strangely-dressed men and women standing behind him. One gave Lydia a sheepish wave. "I'm already at the cap."

"I-I see," said Lydia, who really didn't. "F-forgive me, but Milkwood has nothing else to offer in re—"

The Hero groaned again. "Okay, okay, fine," he said, snatching a bag of holding off his belt. Rummaging inside it, he retrieved a simple bottle. It was one of the kind normally used to store healing and mana potions, though Lydia couldn't see any sign of elixir inside it. "Here," he said, offering it to Lydia.

She took it with a frown. "You want me to drink this?"

"Nah," said the Hero, "just pop the cap."

Lydia gave him a searching look, but the Hero offered nothing else by way of explanation. So, with a frown, she pinched the bottle's cork and—

*Pop!*

—a jolt of magic struck Lydia in the nose.

As she collapsed to her knees, all the strength gone from her legs, the Hero loomed over her, looking bored. "Don't worry," he said, voice flat. "We don't have a slot for you at the

moment, so I'm just gonna store you as an item until one opens up." He shrugged, as if this were a normal part of doing business.

*An item?!*

As she struggled to process what this meant, a wave of tingling washed through Lydia's form and made her shiver. The worst part was when it hit her sex, which thrummed with the same intense activity as a freshly-disturbed beehive. With effort she slammed her legs shut, not that it kept her from leaking.

Red-faced, heart pounding faster with every second that passed, Lydia raised a hand and saw it turning... green—exactly the same shade as her eyes. She gave a little squeak.

Worse than her strange change in color, she was also turning *translucent*. Staring at her hand, she found she could see right through her palm to the dirt on the other side. Even as she watched, a little bubble formed in her depths. *Blup!*

Her other hand trembled, and the bottle she'd been holding fell.

"Careful," said the Hero, snatching it out of the air before it could strike the ground. "Don't want your new home to end up in pieces."

*N-new home?!* Lydia spasmed as a fresh wave of tingling rolled through her, forcing her to close her eyes and bite her lip to resist the desperate urge to stick her fingers in her pussy. It *burned* with desire, and she wanted nothing more than to sate it.

When she opened her eyes again, she found the change had spread down her hand along her arm to her elbow. Even as she watched, she started dripping.

It was slow at first, just the tiniest droplets, smaller even than tears. As she stared, they detached from her fingers and floated upward like raindrops in reverse, arcing through the air to land in the Hero's bottle. All she could do was watch.

With every second that passed, the rate grew a little faster. Soon her fingers were flowing off to fill the bottle, followed by her hands and her lower arms in turn. She tried to grapple them, stop them from leaving her, but of course it was hard when they were the very limbs she needed to grab them.

As her torso turned green inside her top, her neatly-exposed cleavage became the same green fluid as the rest of her, and Lydia watched her limbs pour through the air into the bottle. As her legs flew away, her pants fell empty, and she slumped to the ground like a defeated slime. She tried to scream, but the only sound that came out was a gurgle.

She was losing globules now. Big, fist-sized dollops of her body—whole hands' worth—with every second. As her stomach slid away, she fell and landed on her back. She could only lie there, eyes wide as her breasts followed swiftly.

A moment later, all that remained of her was her head, reduced to a strangely-shaped packet of potion, like a bust made of slime. Then the bottle seized that too, and she found the world flying past her as her eyes sailed through the air.

Lydia tried (and failed) to scream as the bottle's nozzle approached her. It was as small as any normal potion bottle's, and there was no way she could fit through it.

If she'd still been solid, this would have been true, but of course her body was a little more fluid than it had been five minutes ago. As it was, slipping through the nozzle was no more difficult than squeezing through a particularly tight gap in the treeline. She felt the pressure of the glass on her head as she passed through and—

—that was it. It was over. Her head landed with a splash in the bottle, and it was over.

From her little cage of glass, Lydia watched the Hero stoop and pick up the cork she'd dropped. As he slipped it back into the open nozzle, the bottle shimmered and shifted as if it were made of clay. As it did so, it shrank and it squeezed her, molding her into its strange new shape in turn. Since she was watching from the inside, it took Lydia a moment to realize exactly what this shape was.

Her. It looked like *her*. Tiny and naked and all scrunched into a bottle-shape, with her mouth open wide and plugged by the bottle's cork. It might have been the most embarrassing thing she'd ever seen, if not for the rest of her predicament.

"Perfect," said the Hero, tossing her and catching her. Lydia screamed in her head as she sailed up into the air and back down into his palm. "Much easier to store than a person." Lydia's world spun as she turned to face his team. "Come on, let's get this dragon carved so we can move on. I hear their scales sell for hundreds in Marketon, and I wanna get *something* worthwhile out of this quest."

His hands went to the bag of holding on his belt. As he drew it open, Lydia had one last moment to look at the world and the forest and the sun in the sky above.

Then she slipped into the bag and everything went dark.

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It was impossible for her to tell how long she spent in the little prison of her bottle, inside the slightly larger prison of the bag. Holdingspace was an endless black void with no light whatsoever, let alone a day-night cycle to let her know how long she'd been there.

To start, she tried to keep track of time herself, but with no way to mark it off or correct her counting when she lost track (which happened a lot, since she had quite a lot to ruminate about), it soon proved impossible. So she gave up and settled for wallowing in her bottle like the liquid she'd become.

What was going to happen to her? They'd turned her back eventually, right? As soon as they had a spot, surely? Someone would leave the Hero's party *eventually*, and when that

happened they were certain to pull her out and turn her back... right? They wouldn't just leave her to rot in this bag of holding like any normal piece of loot, would they? ...Would they?

Time passed. At an indeterminable rate, but it passed.

Occasionally, something would happen to punctuate Lydia's dark little purgatory: something would enter the bag and move around, occasionally brushing against her. The second time this happened, she realized it was a hand, and from that point on, each occurrence fed a little spark of hope deep in her liquid breast. Perhaps it was finally *her* turn.

...It never was.

Time passed, as slow and excruciatingly as a kidney stone.

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Something jostled her.

As her fluid form splashed inside its container, Lydia woke from a long not-quite-sleep and did the mental equivalent of blinking her eyes. *What's happening? What's going on?*

Something brushed her bottle again, making her ripple. A hand, she realized dismally. It was just someone's hand, come to retrieve something useful. She wished it'd at least be polite enough not to wake her.

The hand struck her a third time, making her quake with the impact. Only, this time, the hand didn't move on—instead, its fingers tightened around her, pulled her. It took her a moment to realize what was going on.

It was happening! It was finally happening! They'd finally opened up a slot for her! If Lydia still had arms, she would have thrown them up and cheered. As it was, she settled for splashing about excitedly.

The darkness and silence of Holdingspace fell away, replaced by the torchlight of a dungeon and the sound of steel striking steel. Lydia heard the deep rumble of an orge's cry, followed by a gasp of pain from someone—the Hero?

"Finally!" said a woman's voice from above. It took her a second to realize it was the person who'd retrieved her.

*Let me out!* she thought-screamed. *Let me out so I can help you!*

A pair of fingers tightened on her cork. With a pop, it came free. Had she still had a mouth, Lydia would have screamed in joy. She could already feel her body flowing upward, desperate to be free.

The world whirled, and Lydia found herself staring into a dark red cave, its walls slick with fluid. White stalactites and stalagmites ringed the entranceway, while the floor of the cavern writhed as if alive.

It took her a second to realize what she was looking at.

*N-no, thought Lydia. N-no! No! Nononono! Stop! Stop! You can't drink me! You can't drink me!*

Too late. Her bottle upended, and her body, all ready to escape, sought the exit with speed. All she could do was scream in her hand as she flowed onto the woman's tongue and down her throat like any normal potion. The slick red walls of the cave became a tunnel of utter darkness.

*No! Lydia screamed as she fell. Nononono!*

"Hey..." said a distant, fading voice. "That wasn't a health potion..."

Lydia trickled into a lake of burning acid, which set her mind aflame with pleasure even as it ate away at her body. With every second, her delight grew a little bit greater...

...until at last she orgasmed right as she dissolved.

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Lydia awakened to the sound of rusting leather. "Fucking finally," said a somewhat familiar voice. Lydia recognised it from somewhere, though she couldn't tell where. For some reason, she could smell asparagus.

Her form flowed through a thin, dark tube. One even thinner than the nozzle of her former bottle. (Where *was* her bottle now? She almost wanted to go back there.)

Just as she thought she would flow down this tube forever, a pinprick of light appeared in the distance and welled into a blazing beacon. If Lydia still had hands, she would have shielded her eyes.

Accompanying the light came another familiar sound: a playful little trickle. The kind a little stream makes when it splashes into a pond. Or the sound that *she* made when she urinated in the woods while hunting.

*...Oh.*

The light cleared, and the green of the forest floor rushed up to meet her.

Landing with a splash amid the blades of grass and leaves, Lydia flowed in drops and dribbles to the dirt of the ground, where her fluid form seeped into the dirt

“Aaaah~,” said the woman above. As Lydia’s former head sank into the earth, she looked up and saw the woman—the Hero’s rogue—straighten her legs and pull up her breeches. “Gods, that feels so much better,” she said, turning to leave.

Lydia watched her retreat with a feeling she couldn’t quite process. Lying there on the ground, reduced to a few stray drops of piss, all she could do was stare at the wood around her and think. This wasn’t the forest she’d grown up in, but it was something. She wondered if she’d water one of the trees. That would be nice.

A second later, the dirt drank her up, and the darkness claimed her once again.