

72: Supper

The moment Beatrice stepped through the door, Tabitha jumped from the table, knocking the chair aside, and ran right into Beatrice's face.

"WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ALL THIS TIME!?" The skinny, half-naked, green-haired mage screamed.

Beatrice pushed Tabitha back and wiped the mage's spit off her face before saying, "Calm down! We've been gone for like an hour or something."

"It felt like years!" Tabitha cried out.

"Don't exaggerate," Beatrice said. She felt like she had to calm down her companions a little too much lately. *I might need to find some more-level-headed partners*, she thought.

Tabitha then switched her gaze from Beatrice to Olivia. The ninja still had her head lowered. But what was actually disgust and sickness due to Olivia's recent discovery, Tabitha interpreted as after-sex shame.

"You," Tabitha hissed. "Don't tell me... You hadn't... Don't tell me you did it and you didn't even let me watch!"

"Don't forget your place!" Beatrice said firmly, but slightly raising her voice involuntarily. The succubus did not intend to raise her voice, but she simply couldn't handle another fight right now. Beatrice also noted that Tabitha had started to develop some possessive traits. *As if she already doesn't have enough unhealthy personality traits!* Beatrice thought.

"Eh?" Tabitha squeaked like a mouse and dropped to the floor. "I beg your forgiveness! I don't know what I was thinking! When I imagined you at what you do best, I just..."

"It's fine," Beatrice sighed. "It's been a very, very long day."

"Then may I offer you some supper before you all go to bed?" the butcher's little twelve-year-old with a single, thick red braid falling to her feet cheerfully asked, reminding of her presence, and gestured to the table with a humble array of food. Beatrice looked and saw several plates with boiled potatoes, carrots, some more apples, bread, and filled cups.

"Exactly, what I wanted to hear!" Ember said and rubbed her hands, excited to fill her belly.

"Oh! It's great!" Tabitha jumped to her feet with excitement. "Everything's fresh! I don't know who these guys are that they can get this type of stuff, but it's incredible! We should come here more often! And you absolutely have to try the stew!"

"What?" Ember asked and froze in place when she heard Tabitha's suggestion.

"The stew! The little kid didn't even bother offering it, and just kept eating it in the corner by herself, mumbling something about her father's instructions not to offer it to the guests... But she didn't mind sharing, and it's delicious! By far the best I've eaten in ages!"

Oh, no, Beatrice's heart sunk. She had a bad feeling. And for a good reason—the mood in the room went sour. Ember stood in like a statue, not taking another step to the table. Jenny looked away and nervously played with her fiery red braid. Olivia looked paler than a corpse.

“Did the stew have any meat in it?” Ember asked.

“Oh, some of the very best!” Tabitha exclaimed, trying to share her joy. “Not like that smelly old stuff they serve at the Limp Pony!”

“I'm guessing you weren't paying attention to what's been going on outside?” Ember asked Tabitha.

“Why?” Tabitha wondered. “There was this big lion that came and talked with the girl's dad. He couldn't fit through the door so they talked outside. The dad said he had a delivery to take care of, but that he'd be back real soon, and that his daughter would arrange the food for us. I-I'm sorry, Beatrice! I tried waiting for you! I thought you'd all be right back! But it smelled so good! And I was so hungry!”

“Did you forget that Ember asked not to eat any meat here?” Beatrice asked.

“B-but she wasn't here, and I thought...” Tabitha's voice trailed off.

“Look, Samuel is a butcher,” Beatrice stated calmly. “But where do you think the meat in your stew came from?”

Tabitha shrugged. Then, as if a lightbulb lit up above her head, she raised her hand and called out, “Oh, I know, I know! That delivery that just arrived!”

“Very good,” Beatrice congratulated her like a teacher her pupil. “And do you know where that meat came from that they delivered?”

Tabitha thought for a couple of seconds and then answered, “Does it matter if it's actually delicious and not the half-spoiled garbage I usually have to live on?”

“Ah,” Beatrice thought about what the mage just said. What must life be like when one of the most basic of human needs is met with about the same quality as what bums would get back in her old, modern world?

The succubus walked up to the little girl and patted her on the head, and made a silent vow—*I'll make this world a better place!*