

Vess had done a good enough job of convincing herself that she had a chance at victory that she forgot to plan for what would happen if anything went off the rails. Everything had been planned down to the most minute detail; she went so far as to “procure” the blueprints for that year’s arena solely so she could draw out her plan of attack, running simulations several dozen times over while conferring with her advisors on how best to approach the Crucible. All of it to ensure the best possible odds of winning the bout and coming out of it with a juicy promotion.

At first, things seemed to be going just fine. She used the preparation time to coil her tail into a small stack, then carefully balanced herself on it to engage in a simple meditative exercise; with her eyes closed, her mind focused on maintaining her heart rate stable, Vess barely heard the announcers over the intercom. Nor did she care enough to pay attention; when it came to the day itself, when she was shoved into a much too tight skinsuit and told who she was going up against, the individual identities of her opponents didn’t matter: they were her enemies, and just like so many times before, her only job was to neutralise them.

Granted, it was far less lethal than she was used to, but still just as effective; more than, given their species’ rather lackluster resistance to chemical attacks targeting... *that* specific part of their neural anatomy. She tried not to think about it too much; doing so ran the risk of her growing aroused just on itself, and the last thing Vess needed was for her tits to start swelling before any shots were fired.

Plus, that was what she was meant to do to *them*. If she had it her way, the serpent would be left in that selfsame meditative position in the middle of the battleground, just as flat as she’d always been, with her three opponents squirming on the ground beside her, having fallen prey to their own baser instincts... and Vess’ own marksmanship. She found it somewhat odd that the stun gun didn’t come with any proper safety mechanisms, though to a certain degree, one expected the organisers needed to add something to spice the contest up.

No matter. She wasn’t going to shoot herself, that was ridiculous; no one *else* would get to shoot at her either, no matter how much they tried. Her dexterity and dominance of battlefield tactics would weave together to create an impossibly graceful dance, where she would bob and weave between rounds, impossible to hit, incapable of being stopped, as she took potshots at whoever was dumb enough to give her even so much as a sliver of their form to be seen.

All nice thoughts, none of which would survive first contact with the enemy. Somehow, the moment the doors dropped and her staging area was open to the arena, a single stray blast flew past her, missing her by little more than a handspan before loudly pinging off the metal plates behind her. Vess, rather than immediately duck for cover, was instead frozen in place; the last time she checked, the arena was large enough that no one should’ve been able to fire from their

starting positions and hit *anyone* with the range on those stun guns... especially not when there was an artificial jungle in the way.

A dozen or so scenarios went through Vess' head as she tried to compute the possibilities: was someone cheating? Did they have a different weapon, and her own stun gun was only one of the available choices? Did she imagine the whole thing? Was it just a holographic projection put in place to make for a more exciting broadcast? It couldn't possibly have been a legitimate shot; her planning had ruled that out, no one could've *possibly* been that accura-

She felt a tightness in her chest, immediately preceded by something piercing through it: like a needle, it went in her front and shot right out the back, doubling her over as her hands and arms instinctively cradled her chest, Vess hugging herself to make the pain go away. Though, there was no pain; there should be, given that she was just *shot*, but instead, all she felt was... warmth.

It took a few seconds before she remembered where she was supposed to be, after which her arms were immediately dropped to her sides so she could assess the damage done to herself. It was the last thing Vess did with nothing but a purely logical intent: she was shot with the stun gun, so clearly she had to check for injuries or any side-effects; once she did, however, she was no longer capable of thinking about it in such a simple, straightforward manner.

At no point had she actually demonstrated any interest in the more *lurid* aspects of the Crucible. Vess understood *why* they were there, understood why they *had* to be there, but didn't particularly care for them; they were something for the crowd (and the investors), not herself, not when she had a much greater prize than a pair of tits. But now that her body had been given a command to go on overdrive, now that her libido had been spiked to such a degree that one of her hands almost automatically moved to a certain, most sensitive part of her tail, she couldn't be so certain anymore.

It did feel good. It felt *more* than good, actually, felt like she should've gone through it several times over and had been wasting her time until then. It felt like her bust wasn't growing so much as it was coming into being: like she was *always* meant to have a pair of tits that stretched that skinsuit out, and was just now having them revealed. One hand firmly on them, she *needed* to feel them coming in, Vess *needed* to know what it was like to *have breasts*, to squeeze her supple flesh, to feel it swell and surge, to have the tightness *in* her chest turn to one *outside* it as the suit she wore grew far too tight for her renewed size.

It wasn't until the third shot in quick succession slammed on the metal plating above her that Vess was snapped out of it, her natural instincts kicking in when she remembered just *where* she was. Panicked, the serpent dashed forward, almost tripping on herself now that her centre of balance was noticeably affected; she had to use one hand as an anchor on whatever greenery was

closest to her as she slithered through the jungle floor, keeping her head down to avoid whatever sniper was using her for target practice. If only she made it to the middle of the arena, then at least she could force the issue in *her* favour.

At the very least, she made it to the objective first, just like she planned; maybe, Vess thought to herself in a moment of madness, she could put things back on the rails. Maybe, now that she was there and exactly how she wanted it, she could direct how things went and force the other contestants to abide by *her* strategy. It didn't occur to her that maybe climbing onto the platform would've been a bad idea; in fact, it was the first thing she did, though at least she was smart enough to hide behind a stack of metal crates.

It didn't take more than a few seconds before a shower of stun gun rounds rained around her, grazing parts of her tail and only adding to the overall feeling that she was about to burst. Every glancing hit only made things worse: no matter how little of her the round affected, it still went right up her tail and straight into her pleasure centres, then right back down to her venom sacks and the ensuing overproductivity. Even in cover, Vess was forced to watch as her bust billowed forth even more, in full view of everyone watching... and that, that she couldn't take.

Her entire body coiled up, compacted as she tried to occupy as little space as possible; her arms, as before, hugged her chest in an effort to keep it away from prying views, knowing as she did that there were potentially *millions* of people watching the Crucible that year. To think, that she'd been selected as a contestant, and was now well on her way to being nothing but eye candy; it was *horrid*, and she wouldn't stand by it... not that she could do much, given that she was stuck on the objective and couldn't move without risking a full barrage slamming into her.

But she couldn't just *stay* there either; while it was only her chest growing, the platform seemed to be getting smaller as well, seeing as the stun gun round had enough force behind them to chip away at parts of the crates Vess was using for cover. It would still take a long while before she was forced to relocate, but leaving it for the very end would guarantee her entire body would be hit by the other three competitors; she needed to move *now*, even if it risked further arousal, especially when at least one of the other serpents was some form of hyper-competent marksman.

Getting a bead for where most of the shots were coming from, Vess did the only thing she could: take her stun gun, aim it haphazardly over her cover, and fire as many rounds as she could in the general direction of her assailant, before diving out of cover and into the foliage surrounding the centre of the arena. For a short few moments, when adrenaline was still running high, she was convinced she'd made it; the distraction worked, she was back where no one could see her, and now she could recover and focus on gaining the upper hand.

It was only when she turned to face the metal platform, and *felt* the weights on her shoulders turn around with her, that Vess knew just how badly she'd screwed up. She didn't want to look down; she knew full well that the moment she did, her eyes would be stuck on her tits, doubly so given how the crowd's cheers, transmitted via intercoms placed conveniently around the arena, were practically as loud as the stun gun fire whizzing past her. *She* was the main attraction now: a big-titted serpent whose brow was likely drenched in sweat, and whose uniform was left in tatters.

Because of course her *hands* went up to her bust; Vess could control her eyes and head, but the rest of her had no intention of letting such an opportunity go by. Of course her hands squeezed her ample tits, sinking their fingers into their soft flesh, feeling their insides grow warmer as her production rates increased. And of course, her libido was only further affected, the stun gun's effects leading to ever higher arousal, until she was left with only two choices: succumb, or subsume.

She had to keep going. Yes, her breasts were rapidly approaching the size of her head and she felt weaker than ever before, but if there was one thing Vess *knew*, it was that she *had* to press on. If she stopped there, that'd be it: her hands wouldn't stop, her eyes would never open again until she was brought to the infirmary, and someone else would get the prize. If she wanted that promotion, she *needed* to wrangle her horny energy and put it to use in more productive ways.

Thus, she held the grip on her own sidearm as firmly as she could, then slowly slithered up to the treeline, hoping to get a good shot on whoever had been haranguing her from the start; if she was going down, she was at least going to make it a *challenge* for her opponents.