

# Taking Flight

*For Frenetica*

It was before dawn, but Niox was already stirring. The warriors' natural rhythm pulling her out of her peaceful repose. Even so, she found herself hesitating to get up. She lay there instead, drinking in the curve of Vira's parted lips and enjoying the feeling of the other woman's naked body against her own.

The giant four-point hammock the two women shared ensured the they were always comfortably close while asleep, but it certainly also made getting up a trial. Trapped by the comfy, the redheaded fighter found herself reminiscing.

So much of her life had become protecting the slumbering cleric currently nestled in the crook of her arm. In fact, Vira was her sole focus at this point. Her unending devotion to the priestess of Buvhan was the least she could offer after having her life pulled back from the abyss by the brilliant healer. That Vira had looked on this expression of loyalty as Niox proposing still surprised her.

She rolled over and her lover's face slid down to press into her naked back. An arm snaked under hers as Vira snuggled closer, the cleric's large bust squishing against her shoulder blades as fingertips played over her abs. The feeling of the other woman's breath flowing over her skin had her heating up and she sighed with resignation. She knew the day was going to be hard and that she should go for a run to get ready, but also knew Vira was going to make getting up a challenge.

As she moved to swing her legs out of the hammock, Vira's arm wrapped around her shoulder and behind her neck. A leg snaked over her hips. "S'not time to get up yet. Stay in bed, Ni."

"I should not have taught you that hold, my lady."

"It's the only way to keep you in bed sometimes."

“You know I always get up at this time.”

“Yeah and I hate it,” Vira kissed her neck, then began to nibble. “You got up early every day we were off to work out. Make it up to me and stay here for a little bit.”

Niox stifled a moan and pulled away as best she could, though she did not really try. “No, I must go warm up. I am on the sortie today, as are you, and need to be ready if we face combat.”

“Oh, if that is the case, we should both warm up together.” Vira leveraged herself up onto her lover's stomach, taking the blanket with her. Her short, dark hair fell in curtains around her face, highlighting her sun-kissed skin tone. Her naked breasts swung back and forth between her arms as the hammock stabilized. “I can think of no better way than this.”

Biting her lip, Niox dragged her fingers up her lover's well muscled arms and shoulders. The cleric sighed and closed her eyes as she relaxed into the caress. Niox cupped her jaw and got lost in the cleric's mossy green eyes as she opened them. “You're right, I could go for this as a warm up.”

“I'm sure.” Vira giggled as she leaned down to nibble at Niox's neck, her crotch already starting to rock. Her hips slid backwards as the warrior pulled her into a fierce kiss. Lips were bitten. Tongues caressed one another. Their gasps mingled into a soft harmony. Some awkward shifting got their legs past each other and sexes together. Both moaned at the contact of warm skin and soft hair.

Niox grinned as Vira lifted her leg over her shoulder. “Look at you, the little emerald is taking charge.”

“What can I say?” She began to grind against the warrior. “I've learned from the best.”

Tongue pressed into lip, Niox tried to lie back and enjoy the attention. Fingers dug into her leg as each ground harder into the other. In hastening circles, they slid past each other, edging closer to climax. Sensing that the cleric was close to the peak, and unable to continue relaxing, Niox thrust up to skip across the orbit. She ran her clit up between labia to flick Vira's own. The smaller woman gasped

and gripped the warrior's leg tight as a shuddering spasm rolled down her body.

“No matter how many time we do this, that is never not going to feel amazing.” Vira said between gasps as she traced a circle on the inside of Niox's thigh.

“Oh no, you started this, Emerald mine, and you aren't just going to get away with a little contact. You take responsibility and warm me up properly.”

“Yes, Captain,” she said with a grin. “Of course, Captain.”

She tried again to just let things happen, to let the sensations wash over her. Vira started by nuzzling her heel. With small nibbles, the cleric moved her attentions down Niox's leg. She could not hold back her moans as Vira's lips lingered on the her curve of calf and the back of her knee. Loving hands caressed her scars from brawls long since won. Eager fingers dug into her thick muscular thighs. Her ass was gripped firmly as kisses were planted all over her stomach. She arched into the attention, fingers pushing down on her lover's neck as the kisses moved agonizingly slowly towards her sex.

It all stopped suddenly. She glanced down. Vira's face was above her sex. The cleric grinned and bit her lip before kissing her button.

The feeling as her partner's lips brushed her button caused the warrior to buck up. Vira seemed to anticipate that, slipping her tongue between her lover's walls and holding her hips up to her face. Dragging the muscle up, she cupped clit and gently pressed her teeth down. Moving slowly, she rubbed against hood and then dragged back along the short length. She pinched the end and pulled back before starting the whole affair over again a little bit faster.

Niox found her fingers tangled in her lover's dark hair as she began to feel her own climax rising. “Oh Em, that's...mmm.”

Vira did not respond to the warrior's exclamation outside of sliding tongue around either side of her clit.

There was a knock on the cross piece of their tent.

“In a...in a minute! AH!” Niox pulled Vira against her as orgasm made her buck. One such thrust was a little too high and the hammock unhooked on one corner, dropping both women on the floor of their tent.

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With the blanket tied around her significant bust, Vira answered the door. “Yes, what can I do for you?”

The soldier looked past her at first, as if he expected someone taller. He blushed and jumped, no doubt because Niox had gotten to her feet. In his haste to avert his eyes, he looked right into her deep cleavage. Blushing even more, he turned to look at the sun rising on the horizon. “Madam Virasviel, command wants to patrol early today and anticipates resistance. You and the Captain are part of the vanguard. She is in command. Orders are suit up and be ready to move in one hour.”

“Understood, we shall assemble at the North Checkpoint..”

When Vira turned to convey what had been said, Niox had already pulled tights out of her trunk and was slipping into them. The stretchy material clung to the warrior's well-toned butt as she bent to adjust the cuffs. Vira bit her lip in spite of herself. To say their relationship was purely physical would be doing it a disservice, but touching and appreciating the other's body was admittedly a growing part of their bond and Vira was still very much in the mood after being interrupted.

Dropping the door to their tent closed, she crossed the space to embrace her lover within the blanket.

“My lady, we need to get ready.”

With a sigh she stood back and began to gather her own gear. “I just wanted to let you know I'm here for you, Ni. Also, again, stop calling me that. We're equals.”

“I know, Em, it is hard habit to break.”

The warrior, with her crimson hair and foul mouth, had been a huge force in Vira's life. Niox and her squad had been assigned to protect her when she joined the battalion five years ago as part of her pilgrimage. A pilgrimage long since over.

Thinking about it as she pulled a tunic over her head, Vira realized with a start that the only reason she had remained on the front lines was to be with Niox. She could have returned to the relative safety of the temple. Yet, she continued to fight alongside her. She knew just when her other half was injured or in trouble. She could respond to those threats. Knowing that gave her a peace of mind she would not have back in the capital.

Beyond that, just the thought of being separated from Niox now, after all this time, was almost painful. Even if she wanted to return to the temple, it would make Niox choose between her duty and her devotion. Forcing that would be cruel and betrayal on par with a knife in the back.

“Do you think we'll encounter heavy opposition?”

Niox pulled a strap tight on her scaled greave. “I expect it. The Hillxian and their allies are itching to push us back before we can retake Greldyne. They know our alliance with Jethloth is confirmed so our southern flank is no longer at risk.”

Their initial deployment had been against the southern Elves and Vira found herself reminiscing. She had never seen a woman so muscular before, nor one so battle hardened. Vira blushed as she recalled all the nights she fell asleep thinking of the fighter's body, wishing they were laying together.

Despite her fantasies, Niox had been very intimidating in those first few months. Her silent confidence was inspiring as the whispered voice of Buvhan. Her command on the battlefield was masterful. The way she fought with her tower shield and spear was an art form.

And yet, Niox never left her behind either. Never belittled her as she trained with the squad. As

Vira grew in skill and faith, she began to execute battle plans around the cleric's spells, demonstrating respect in a way no words could convey.

It was that respect that saw them safely through so many battles. Standing shoulder to shoulder, the unit had survived the siege of Agathar. They had been in the vanguard of the assault on Fulduin. They was integral to routing the Pain Cult of Hilluk that had taken Datharin.

Close as they were however, they were just comrades then. A divine weapon protected by twelve bodies encased in steel bolstered by faith. She had never once told Niox her feelings.

“Ni, do you think the Grevarian Sect will take the field?” Vira asked as she clipped the hardened leather vest into place. “I am not certain I will be able to stop them if they do.”

“They were seen to the two hundred miles North two weeks ago, even they have limits to their travel speed.” Niox clamped the buckles on her breastplate closed, the metal devices clanging loudly one by one, like the strike of a hammer on an anvil. “Though I wish they were here to pay them back for Greldyne.”

The fall of Greldyne had been eight months ago. Once the eastern most city of the Republic, it was taken by Hillxian forces in the night. As aid rushed to the city, Niox, Vira, and the others were separated from the main force by arcane fog.

Per orders, the unit had hidden her as they scouted for an escape route. Huddled in a cave, she could only cower as, one by one, their lives flickered out in her mind. When she felt Niox go down, she found herself running to the guttering flame. Her hammer had never moved faster, her light had never burned brighter, but her valiant rescue took its toll. The accursed fog had been draining away her power since it rolled in. By time she could safely try to heal Niox, there was nothing left.

She could feel Niox's life in her hands as her pulse faded and rain poured down over them. She could not hear Buvhan through the magical haze. Without power, the words of her art would not form.

She was doomed to watch the woman she loved die in her arms. That their first embrace was such a macabre situation tore at her.

A soldier to the end, Niox looked up at her not with fear, but with grim determination. Even as she bled out, the fighter had faith her cleric would live on.

'Escape,' she had said. 'The main force is just over that ridge and I can die with honor knowing I got you out safely.'

Tears mingling with rain, a power blossomed in her. A kiss on the fighter's chest miraculously healed her, pulling her back from the brink and leaving behind a shimmering burn.

Before she could confess her feelings, Niox pledged, on the bodies of the fallen, that her life belonged to the cleric then, that she would follow her to the ends of the earth. To Vira, it was a proposal, one that she was glad to accept as she let her emotions flow out as well.

Ever since then, the pair had been inseparable. In briefings their hands found each other. As Niox trained through her recovery, Vira was never far away as she communed with Buvhan, if she was not herself training. At first, they had been sneered at. Called terrible names. Command did everything they could to keep them from returning to active duty.

Eventually it was impossible to justify keeping the duo was back. They were fighting fit by all accounts. They were like a force of nature in their first battle. With spell and steel working in tandem, not even masters of the arcane arts or a numbers advantage could stand against them. It became increasingly hard to argue with the fact that the Hammer of Buvhan and Spear of Malduin were a unbreakable combo.

Now, they were the ones sent on missions with the greatest risk.

Vira pulled on her heavy gloves, the leather creaking as she flexed her hands to once more compress the padding that protected her hands from the impact of her chosen weapon. "I believe you,

Ni. I will make sure nothing like that will ever happen again, so long as I draw breath.”

At arms, the duo kissed once more before heading out to join the patrol.

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“Raise shields!” Niox felt the ambush before it happened. They had ended up in the canyon some ways back and it was only the stutter of loose stones over the past hour that gave her any hint that the enemy was near. Dropping to a crouch, she dug her shield into the soft earth and prepared for the worst.

Seconds after had she sunk her shield into the ground and ducked behind it, the sound of arrows hitting studded wood echoed through the troop as the first wave crashed over them. She hooked the soldier at her left shoulder and pulled him behind the man-sized defensive armament just as an arrow blossomed out of his shoulder and he dropped to his back.

The sounds of divine magic filled the choke point as Vira finished casting her spell. An emerald light flickered and then coalesced, deflecting the next attack and giving the troop a chance to form up. With Niox's tower as the spine, shields maneuvered to create a shell of wood, leather, and metal around the cleric and their own archers.

The mystical shield shattered like glass as the third volley began to to crash against it. Vira went to her knees from the shock, but leveraged herself back up with help from her sledge and began to chant another prayer. Arrows were slipping through the cracks. Men and women were going down all around.

Niox was stuck a glancing blow in the leg, but she grit her teeth and remained in position. It was her shoulders that were keeping the bulk of the protection in place, if she crumbled then most of the troop would likely be slaughtered. The thought set off flashbacks of her squad being wiped out. The feeling of blades piercing her body and the feeling of her life bleeding away had the warrior shuddering.

As if she could sense her distress, Vira's voice raised in cadence as she held her palms up to the



sky. There was a chime, a sound like a small gong being struck. When she opened her eyes, they blazed green with power in way they had not before. The cleric stalked out the hasty fortification alone, her hammer held low on her left. As arrows rained towards her, an outstretched palm deflected them. A quick squatting jump sent her flying to the top of the canyon. The sound of hammer crunching armor was audible even twenty feet below.

There was not a fifth volley.

Several tense moments passed before Vira reappeared at the cliff's edge. She signaled that the coast was clear and called down that the canyon rose to the plain a short distance ahead. Niox got the survivors, surprisingly more than three-fourths of the force, on their feet and herded them towards safety.

Waiting on the plain was not just Vira, but the goddess Buvhan herself. The half-snake deity appeared sized the same as her cleric. Her tail coiled into a heap that put them at equal heights. Despite that, something about her presence was massive, as if she towered over everything. On top of hearing Vira defeat at least seven enemies on her own, it underscored just how small the warrior was.

Her blue-black hair formed a swooping crown held in place by a number of lacquered sticks and shimmering pins. Conversely, her body was simply adorned. A strip of cloth was tied over her modest chest and a simple sash, adorned with coins, draped around her hips to create a visible divide between her human and snake halves. Her scales shimmered with each movement, their edges catching the midday light like hundreds of little diamonds.

As the Goddess of Horizons, Buvhan embodied many things, foremost being the promise the war would end. Her optimistic influence gave lift to the idea that eventually her mad sibling Hilluk and his allies would be defeated and peace would return to a land torn apart for three generations. Right at the moment, she only embodied the possibility that Vira would go somewhere Niox could not follow.

Watching the inhumanly beautiful woman talk to Vira with such familiarity was like another arrow strike as it confirmed a fear that had always hovered at the edge of her mind. That they would never really be together. Regardless of how close the two of them were physically, even emotionally, no amount of devotion or loyalty could bridge the fact that the pair lived in different worlds. Niox was sure now that Buvhan resided in Vira's heart and soul in a way no mortal ever could.

As if confirming that feeling, the goddess kissed Vira. First on the forehead then pulling her into a passionate embrace. Coils began to wrap around the cleric as the snake goddess began to chant. In a moment Vira had vanished within the iridescent grasp. Green light shone from within the grasp of her tail, growing brighter until the warrior had to look away.

When she looked back, Buvhan was gone and Vira was changed. Even discounting the glowing green wings, the cleric was a sight to behold. She was easily two feet taller than before and bigger everywhere from head to toe. Her black locks had lengthened and now faded to brilliant green. Her eyes flashed with emerald light as she opened them. Two rings of emerald light danced around her upper arm.

Vira raised her left arm in invitation. Niox took it, her hand small in the cleric's grasp. Looking up felt weird. Normally taller than anyone else, the fighter was at a loss on how to deal with being able to rest her head against another person's shoulder. Met with the scent leather mingled with the lilac that Vira filled her trunk with with, she relaxed into the embrace.

The cleric's body was warmer than usual and Niox felt herself drifting off. As she slipped into sleep, she was hit by images of the gods standing around, arguing. The dream faded into battle and the ferocity of generations being at war washed over her. In that moment, as she tumbled in memories that felt like dark, churning waters. In that darkness, she could feel something moving. Something sinister.

There was a flash of teeth and she screamed. Forcing herself away from Vira, her eyes wide, the warrior fled. She collapsed to her knees behind a boulder and retched in way she had not since her first

kill. A warm hand came to rest on her shoulder, but the sinister feeling returned and she slapped Vira's hand away.

“Attend to the wounded,” she said, looking out over the field instead of at Vira. “Then we move. We need to report back that the enemy lines are already half a days march from camp.”

Without waiting for a response she stalked off, calling a half dozen soldiers to her to make sure another ambush was not lying in wait. She could feel glowing eyes watching her, but refused to look at what her beloved had become. The cleric was something more than human now, something dark and tainted by this war of gods and Niox would have no part of it.

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It was several hours after dark when the vanguard sighted camp. The two women had not spoken much to each other since their reunion on the plains, much less touched. Each time Vira had reached out, Niox pulled away. After all the agonizing about being separated that morning, the terse responses and physical rejections were like daggers. It felt like a bottomless pit had opened up between them.

Putting their issues aside, she dreaded explaining her transformation to command. Much to her surprise, her glowing wings faded away as the column marched into the tight quarters of the tent city. Sure, she was noticeably larger and brighter than before, but at least she was no longer draped in ghostly, glowing feathers.

They reported to command a few moments later. Vira half listened as Niox outlined their sortie before the four generals that oversaw the Eastern front. She tried to be attentive, but her mind was occupied with what had transpired. Meeting Buvhan, embracing her, was a feeling she would never forget. Looking down at the glowing rings around her upper arm, Vira still could not believe she had received such a benediction. Her Goddess assured her there was no one better to be blessed with a fragment of divine power. Buvhan was clear that she was making her cleric a demi-goddess so that she

would always have the power to protect the one she loved. The power to ensure that the future would be happy not only for them but so many others.

'You love so purely, so fiercely, Virasviel. You wield that hammer, not out of obligation, or duty, but for the singular purpose to forge a life for you, Niox, and so many others beyond the constant fighting. This is twice now you have drawn on something few ever touch and I am doing my part to ensure that light only gets brighter.'

Niox was getting to the ambush when she was interrupted by Deljhan, Lord Commander of the Republic's Eastern Force. He was a swarthy old man, his face and head clean shaven. Vira was not a fan and the feeling was mutual. He had never been happy about her being assigned to his force and was once of the most vocal opponents of her and Niox having a relationship after the attack at Greldyne.

“If you sensed the attack, Captain Analan, why did you not sound a retreat?”

“The trap was already sprung, Lord Commander. If we had retreated, we would have been pursued nearly the whole way back to camp, taking losses the entire way. As it was-”

“As it was, you were saved by a miracle.” Interjected Vice Commander Jellad. “You are fortunate the Hammer of Buvhan strikes true.”

As the portly man continued to berate Niox, the Deljhan turned his attention to Vira. His gaze lingered on her far more than she was comfortable with. He always looked at her like she was some prize to be claimed, but the rift with Niox made her particularly aware of the old man's eyes on her. She could almost feel his hunger to bed her, to subjugate her.

Though she was still at arms, she still raised her arm to her chest reflexively in modesty. In that moment it felt as though he had walked in on her half-dressed. As she watched him watch her, more of his thoughts unfolded. Behind him a sick fantasy played out where he had his way with both of them and then left them chained up, only to be released when violence was necessary. Before she realized it,

her other hand was reaching for her hammer as the brightness in her eyes flared.

“Mind your eyes and thoughts, Lord Commander,” she said with a hint of steel in her voice as she tapped the hammer on the floor drawing everyone's attention. “Lest they be burned out.”

“I know not what you mean, Priestess. I have-”

“Nothing but lust for me in your heart. I am not some maiden to be leered at. I am a Cleric of the Horizon, a Bringer of Promise, and now, a Chosen.”

With her last words, her wings flared into life. Those assembled scrambled back from the sudden brilliance. Only Niox did not flinch at her display. Though she was not sure if it was trust or stubbornness that kept the warrior nearby, but she remained at attention all the same.

“I do not claim to understand the intricacies of war, my Lords, but you will do well to remember that while I fight for you, I am not one of your soldiers. The unit I am attached to is under my command and my divine protection. Is that not why you send us on missions you would not send any normal group?”

The council of elder men all managed to look a little embarrassed.

“So do not speak to your officer and my partner as if she made some critical error. You had her patrol broken land that had not been scouted for weeks. You sent a force with only a half dozen archers into territory with major changes in elevation. All things considered, today went well. Though it was my hammer that ended the skirmish, it was Captain Analan's actions and quick thinking that saved twenty-seven this day.”

There was a moment of stunned silence, during which she turned and strode out leaving a trail of ghostly feathers. She waited outside of the audience chamber after that and then followed Niox to the mess hall. The pair got food quietly.

Niox dropped onto a bench, her food hitting the table a second later. She sat around the fighter

with her legs outside. She wrapped arms around her waist and rest her chin on her shoulder. Exhausted, Niox leaned into the embrace at first but then jerked away with a shudder.

“I don't think the hammock is going to work any more,” Vira ventured, trying to crack open her lover's shell as she struggled to fit her knees under the table.

“At least with its configuration, yes.” Niox was busying herself with the food on her plate. “Will probably need stronger and thicker timbers to support us.”

While positive in its implications, the answer did not really give Vira a handhold so she changed tracks.

“Sleeping on the ground for a little while won't be so bad. I have you with me and it'll be like when we first started out.”

“I suppose that is true.”

The silence between them stretched on with only the sound of Niox's fork against the plate to fill it. Finally, Vira put her hands on the fighter's shoulders and forced her to turn around.

“What is wrong, Ni? You have been...different since we got back.”

“I've been different?” The warrior got up and turned back to face her. “Vira, look at yourself. You're the one who's different! People don't just grow two feet in an instant and then act like nothing happened!” With that, Niox walked away.

Vira paused for a moment, stunned by the words. Niox was out of sight before she could bring herself to move, but the fighter was not hard to find. In her wake was a trail of startled soldiers and broken standards which lead to their tent.

Niox was packing her things when Vira walked through the flap. “Talk to me, Ni! Tell me what is wrong!”

“You aren't you anymore, simple as that.”

“I am still me though, just bigger.”

“Bigger and with wings!”

“What does that even matter? They go away!”

“I...I...” The warrior sat down on her trunk. She took a deep breath and then exhaled. “Being around you is frightening now. Whenever I'm near you, I feel this darkness and this maliciousness that scares me more than the flashbacks.”

“Buvhan said-”

“I don't CARE what Buvhan said! She's an impossibility.”

“Are you saying that everything I've ever done is an illusion? That it is worth nothing?”

“No, that's...that's not it. At least, not really. I felt so small today, so powerless. We ended up in a trap because I made a bad judgment call and you just happened to be favored today so things turned out all right. At least until Buvhan actually showed up...”

Vira sat awkwardly on the trunk next to her beloved. “It was not Buvhan's favor that won this day, Ni. Trite as this might sound, you are the reason I could summon that power today.”

“But I saw her bless you!”

“Yes, how I am now is her benediction, but it is because I have drawn power from our connection twice now that she even noticed me. It was not her blessing that gave me the strength to heal you, the hope and faith you had in me was what gave me the power to heal you.”

Niox began to speak, but Vira shushed her. “It is likely the darkness that you are feeling Hilluk's attention on me. I am a curiosity now, one of only a few disciples granted direct favor from our patron in the whole of the Theonite. I'll protect you from him. Have the same faith in me you always feel.”

The warrior leaned into her and tensed, but did not recoil. Eventually, she sighed. “I don't feel the darkness anymore, there is just a sense of calm,” she looked up at her, hand caressing her jaw. “And the scent of lilac.”

The kissed then. Quickly, halting, unsure and yet, wanting.

Niox grinned as they sat back. “How are you feeling?”

“Better.”

“Why don't we find out just what that new body of yours feels like? Maybe I can make you feel great,” she said with a laugh.

Vira undid the ties on her leather vest first, slipping the armor off. As she held it in her hands, she was honestly amazed that it had somehow sized up with her. It had not occurred to her that she should have outgrown it. Curious, she cupped her bosom and was surprised to find that her hands could no longer contain her boobs.

The clamps on Niox's armor sang with their release, pulling her back to the moment and the warrior got up to put the breastplate on her armor stand. Kneeling behind her, Vira undid the straps on her greaves and helped her slip off her boots as the warrior removed her bracers. Dragging circles in the sore calf muscles of her partner, she slowly rose until her thumbs were working out knots in Niox's shoulders.

The fighter turned and pulled her down into a kiss with lots of nibbling. Going to her knees, Vira worked her fingers into her partner's ass. Niox pulled off her shirt and kissing once more, they rolled to the floor in their embrace. Hands rubbed skin under cloth as the tent began to fill with a soft green glow.

Unlike that morning, Niox took control of the situation right away and pinned her larger lover by her wrists and began attacking her neck with bites and kisses. The warrior dragged her teeth along her



jaw, moving ever closer to her mouth until she bit bottom lip.

Niox's hands were smaller against her than she remembered, but no less deft. The warrior turned her attention to the Vira's own muscles. She moaned as her fingertips gently brushed hardened stomach. She leaned down to caressed her more defined sides, kissing the cleric once more. Finally they dug into shoulders that were surprisingly big and so very tight.

Sitting up, her shirt came off and both women let out a gasp. Even with an idea of how much she had grown, seeing them in just her brazier underscored the scope of her changes. Unclipping her undergarment, she let her boobs drop to her chest. Niox at once was palming them, the fighter's whole hand just barely larger than her expanded areolae.

The touch made her gasp and then moan as her love began to massage her. The sensation was amazing, the pleasure even more intense than it had been in the past. Back to kissing, they were both getting into their rekindling connection. It felt like they would be able to spend the whole night in each others arms. Which is exactly when the alarm bell began to sound.

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Niox was on her feet before the third chime, stumbling as she climbed out of Vira's lap. The reports abruptly came to a halt as screams began to filter through the camp. A moment later, three soldiers in black armor and white masks entered their tent.

“For the glory of Hilluk!”

The pair reacted instinctively, Vira lashing out with divine magic as Niox scooped up her spear. One went down with several feather-like blades lodged in his chest, but the other two had raised their shields in time.

As the warrior took up a defensive posture, Vira's hands rested on her shoulders. The warmth of her lover spread over her body as glowing green armor formed around her. Charging into the pair, she

hit them both with her spear held sideways and forced them back through the flap. She lifted her tower shield out of the dirt as Vira, also wrapped up in glowing armor, stepped out of the tent. Her hammer was burning as were her eyes. Her ghostly wings flared into life, lighting half a mile in every direction.

“Do you think you can fly with those?”

Vira shrugged and jumped, only to hang in the air at the apex of her leap. “This is...”

“So amazing.”

They both laughed and then set off for command. Niox moved down the narrow roads between tents with her shield raised as Vira hovered over her shoulder. Another Hillxian soldier burst out of a tent right on top of them, his dagger flashing in the dark. Niox dropped her shield to jump back as the blade whistled past her ear. Several wet thuds came from behind her as he was dispatched in a flurry of energy flechettes.

“Whew, have to be careful. Can't assume that the camp is still ours. Have to behave like this is enemy territory.”

“These seem like a liability then.” She pointed at her wings, still glowing cheerfully. “As does our present armor.”

“True.” Niox put her hand on her hip and then swore. There was no telling if these were just grunts, or if there were spellcasters with them. The images of Vira being shot out of the sky with a ball of fire or bolt of lightning made her bite her lip, but there were not any other options. “All right, stealth is out. Just, be careful, okay?”

“I will, you do the same,” she said, jumping back into the air.

It was not long before their encounters were no longer with single soldiers, but small units. The first trio spent all their time trying to knock Vira out of the sky, allowing Niox to defeat them easily.

“So I say we keep doing that.”

“Seems right, they did not even notice you until two of them were downed.”

The next encounter went much the same way. Vira flew over them, catching their attention. When the detachment of soldiers looked up, Niox would get in a couple of good stabs to disable at least one. Vira typically would get a second between her hammer and the energy daggers her wings produced. Landing among the survivors was usually enough to get them to try and attack the cleric which gave Niox an opportunity to get in another disabling attack.

The groups got larger as they neared the center of camp, but the plan continued to work. Reaching the command post, they found a good number of survivors manning the fortifications, but it was likely a third of the main force had already perished in the raid. Among the survivors was Lord Commander Deljhan.

“What seems to be the situation, Lord Commander?”

“Ah, Captain Analan, Madam Virasviel. I am glad to see you unharmed.”

Vira clicked her tongue. “Wouldn't want your precious weapons stolen or broken, right?”

“I, uh, that is to say...”

“Forget it! Ni, find the wounded. I'll see what I can do about giving us some breathing room,” and she was off again. Niox was not sure if it was just a trick of her light against the night sky, but she seemed even bigger than before. As she began to tear up tents to clear a space around the command post, Niox turned to Deljhan.

“Lead on, Lord Commander.”

The old man grit his teeth but turned and led her to the makeshift infirmary. There were two dozen wounded many of them critical. There was no way Vira could handle healing them all. Still, she had to

try. She snapped a flare and set it on the window. A moment later, her visibly larger partner arrived. She had to be over eight feet tall now, her swelling arm and shoulder muscles shining with sweat.

“I cleared a half mile in every direction. It should give us a chance to respond if they attack again.”

“Good.” She pecked her wife on the cheek. “Do you have power left for healing?”

“I’ll be honest, I feel like I am made of power right now,” she said as she moved towards the first soldier. “I can’t quite explain it, but it is like I can hear everyone’s thoughts below me while I am aloft. I can feel their faith in me. This must be what it feels like to be a goddess, well, a demi-goddess.” In fact, I wonder...” The cleric raised her hands and the light from her wings intensified, washing over all of them.

Niox felt her fatigue fade as cuts and bruises from the course of the day began to heal. The soreness from two skirmishes in one day leached out of her. In the span of a couple breaths, she felt like she had rested for a couple days.

“That felt wonderful, Em. Now, let’s kick these scum out.”

Returning to the fortifications, Hillxian soldiers were pouring out of the tent city. The raiding party seemed to be almost a full scale deployment. Niox was not sure how to get out of this situation.

“Don’t worry, Ni. Have faith.”

As the first wave of invaders approached the barricades, green light obstructed their path. Vira raised her hammer and the barrier solidified into another wall. A battering ram was brought up. The first hit threw her hair back. The second knocked her down. The wall flickered, but she threw both of her hands up and squeezed her eyes closed as she fought to hold the wall.

Niox turned to the soldiers hunkered down behind the fortifications. “Comrades! I need your hearts and minds. I need you to remember all the times I’ve had your back. All the times Vira’s hands

soothed your wounds. Focus on those moments and have faith we'll survive this the same way we have survived until now. Together!"

A shout went up and the effect was evident. As their faith in Vira grew so did both her power and her stature. Pulling herself to her feet, the cleric began to grow. First nine feet, then eleven, she and her equipment expanded until her light she was a beacon to all in the camp. As she began to chant, the energy peeled back from her wings, revealing white feathers tipped in shimmering emerald. The change in brilliance was it was like the sun had risen.

The walls had grown with Vira, the fortifications now fifteen feet tall. Finishing her chant, she thrust her arms forward and the walls became waves. The flow of emerald energy surged through the camp, pushing back the invading force. Scattered, the remaining Hillxian forces withdrew.

Deljhan stepped up on the battlements. "We may have won a victory tonight, but the raid has served its purpose. The camp was destroyed, the army shaken. We will not be able to defend this position any longer."

He continued to grandstand, to take credit for the cleric's actions and Niox turned her attention to her love. Coming down off the high, Vira had shrank almost back to her original size. She smiled as she collapsed into Niox's arms.

"I guess we can use the hammock tonight after all."

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Vira actually got up before Niox and, to her surprise, the world kept turning. She drifted awake at the sounds of birds tweeting and camp being broken down. Attempting to get out of the hammock was even more difficult than usual. It seemed that after some rest her body had returned to its new baseline. She found herself running her hands over her naked body, taking in just how much she had been changed. In all of the action last night she had not really be able to come to grips with how she looked

now.

She could not even cup her bosom anymore, the soft flesh flowing way over her fingers. Her hips, too, were even more womanly than they had been, her fingers sinking in to the first knuckle before hitting toned muscles. She had never thought about being so curvy, but was enjoying how it made her feel, especially as Niox snuggled into her.

“Ni, we should get up.”

The warrior stirred and smiled before kissing her. “G'morning, you.”

“Morning to you, too. What happened? I don't remember anything after that huge spell I cast.”

Niox shifted to look her in the eye, cradling her head. “We're moving out by noon and headed south to meet Prince Raldar of the Jethloth.”

The warrior's free hand traced circles on her hip as they lay in silence for a moment.

“Actually,” Niox said and then hauled herself out of bed and began to pull on her dress clothes. “I need to report in, I am actually the fifth highest ranking survivor.”

She stopped and turned at the tent door, “I'll be back to break down in a bit.”

Getting out of bed, Vira felt stronger, stronger than she had ever been. Still curious, she wanted to test herself and cast about for something challenging. Her gaze fell on Niox's shield, something she had needed both hands to lift before. The metal was cool against her skin, but quickly heated in her grasp. Preparing to heave, she was thrown completely off balance as the shield rose off the ground with relative ease. She was startled to muscles much larger than she remembered rising out of skin under the slight strain.

Intrigued, she began to mimic Niox's exercises as was rewarded with muscles that rivaled the fighters coming to bear all over her body. The more she worked out, the more she seemed to slim down

until she was visibly muscular all over and still somehow so very curvy.

“This body is incredible!”

Arms wrapped around her waist, “Indeed it is.”

“Ni, I...”

“Was experimenting, I can understand.” The fighter bit her lip while looking her up and down.

“Besides, I like this you.”

Over the next hour they broke down their tent, all of their worldly possessions fitting into three trunks and a canvas-wrapped bundle. Retiring to bathe for what might be the last time in the foreseeable future, the pair stopped in at the watering hole off the river that had been designated a woman's bathhouse.

They sank into the water and let out a sigh.

Niox wasted no time in resuming her own explorations of Vira's changes. Eager fingers dragged over her cut shoulders before beginning to massage her massive bust. As this was going on, Vira was slowly feeling a heat build. Stronger than her normal arousal, it felt almost like she was casting a spell. A twitching sensation rubbed her thigh and she gasped a moment before Niox did.

The warrior rose off her lover as they both looked at her crotch.

“Are you...”

“Manifesting a toy with my energy? It does seem like it.”

Niox reached for it. “You did say your hidden power grew from love...”

“So why not lust as well? I suppose I just haven't had this much spare-OH!”

Not waiting for Vira to finish her thought, Niox had already began to stroke the energy-phallus.

Unlike the glass one they used on occasion, there was sensation—and a lot of it. She was bent upwards,

rising out of the water and giving Niox the opportunity to suck on the curved end.

“This is amazing,” she said after letting go with a pop. “It feels like you're caressing my tongue.”

“Your tongue is doing quite a bit of caressing of its own, don't stop now.”

“Actually...” Niox straddled her and slowly worked herself down the glowing shaft. With arms around her neck, the fighter herself up and down. Vira felt the heat rise further as her body began to move on its own. Her hands gripped her love around her waist, guiding her. Her pelvis rocked back and forth in a clumsy circuit as she tried to rub as much of Niox as she could.

In their passion, they did not hear the warning bell. It was only that Vira looked up at the right moment that she saw the Hillxian mage standing at the edge of their pool. She had time for a single word as she rose and threw Niox behind her in one movement. The inky black ball of mana was not stopped by her barrier, but it passed through her as well.

A cascade of glowing flechettes hit him in the chest with enough force to pin him to a tree some yards away. Vira turned to offer her hand to Niox, but the fighter lay face down in the water. An inky blackness was spreading from her body.

Fishing her beloved out of the stained water, she could feel her still breathing but her pulse was erratic. Groaning and gasping, she was coughing up a seemingly endless supply of ink.

“The spell wasn't for me...It was...they...” She pulled Niox to her, pouring healing energy into her limp body, but it did not seem to help. The warrior continued to spew dark liquid, the fluid coagulating around them.

'I see my acolyte was successful.' The voice seemed to come from everywhere. A sinister hiss that chilled the very air. A mass formed from the inky pool, the vague shape of a humanoid. Glowing eyes opened in the solid shadow.

“Hilluk!”



'Virasviel. Consider this my gift to you for your ascension. The pain will forge you into a formidable foe.'

Vira spat and shot a barrage of energy blades at the inky form. With a laugh Hilluk's presence faded.

"I won't lose," Vira said as she turned back to Niox. "I can save her."

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Niox was floating in relative darkness. Submerged, but able to breathe. Angled shafts of light penetrated the far away surface, illuminating other shapes in the water. One drifted through a column of light revealing the ghostly image of a soldier she had lost during her first command. She recoiled, but the movement seem to awaken the sleeping shadows.

One after another, the mass of dark shapes flared into the ghost of another person she had be responsible for killing. Allies and enemies alike reached for her, their dead hands cold against her skin. There was no battle plan for this situation, no strategy to execute. She was going to be torn apart by her past and that was that.

'Fight!' Vira's voice said in her mind. 'Don't give up!'

A desperate back hand knocked one of the ghouls away and into a few more. Pushing off one that was grabbing at her ankles, she got free of the crush of undead but there was still no way to escape. Hundreds of bodies lay in repose in every direction.

Far above, on the other side of the surface, a green light was growing brighter. Vira was looking for her. She began to paddle up, trying her best to avoid the specters and not get dragged down by them. It felt more like climbing a mountain than swimming. Each ghost of her past both a handhold and a challenge to overcome.

She could see Vira standing on the surface now, looking for her, calling her name. There was only

a few feet left. She put her hand out to break through and was met instead with a solid barrier, almost like ice. Banging on it did nothing, shouting made no noise. She was not even sure Vira could see through the surface to her.

A hand grabbed her ankle. Another, her calf. Steadily her past was catching up to remind her that hope was an illusion. She would die alone, injured and forgotten on the battlefield. Only ever be a tool for others.

'That's not true!' Vira knelt, her hands beating at the barrier. 'You mean something to me!'

Shaking of the fatigue, she wrest her hand out of the mass. Bathed in Vira's, she fought as she sank back into the black abyss.

'I won't lose you again!'

A sound like a thunderclap rang out and the twang of tight string being plucked echoed across the ice-like barrier. Another clap sounded, along with a cracking. Above her, a spiderweb was appearing in the surface. On the third strike, a hammer burst through and green light poured into the sea of darkness. The fluid pushed back against the light, but tendrils of energy crept towards her.

Her specters recoiled at the brightness. Their grip slipping as she grabbed hold what she knew was Vira's energy. The emerald tentacle wrapped around her arm, its essence sinking into her skin. Another rope of light reached her, brushing her other shoulder before also knitting itself to her.

Magic flowed into her. It felt like being heal only more profound. Was this ocean death? Had she died? Just what was Vira trying to? Resurrect her? Was that even possible? Not that it mattered, the cleric would never give up.

A low rumble rose from below as thousands of arms reached towards her. This time it was not just a weight that was dragging her down, something was pulling her towards it. Was this the grip of Vashyi, the goddess of death? Whatever it was, the surface was fading into a murky memory. Its light

choked out by the distance. She felt heavy. The tendrils of energy flickered, their surface starting to pit and wear away.

Above, there was a flare of green. The sound of hammering once more filled the dead ocean. Vira punched another hole through the barrier and sent more of her energies down.

Grabbing hold, the green light turned orange. She could feel herself heating up like during a run. The fluid around her began to boil as her temperature continued to rise. Flames ignited where she was being restrained, hands burning away only for others to replace them. Slowly, steadily, she rose towards the surface as death's literal grip on her was broken again and again. She struggled her hands clawing towards the barrier between this world and the last. Lashing out, it was not just her hands and legs that fought for inches. Like a limb awakening, she became aware of something sprouting out of her back. Flaring into being, feathers of flame beat against the darkness like it was the night sky.

The sound of her hand meeting Vira's was a clap louder than the hammer blows. So loud in fact that her perception shattered. For a moment, everything was searing light and pain and burning.

She could not breathe. She could not move. It was worse than being dead and then the world snapped back into place. She was on her back in Vira's lap. The cleric's face was ashen and streaked with tears. The flickers of power in her eyes were weak and infrequent. The bright green in her hair had faded.

Niox struggled to sit up, to bring her face closer to Vira's. The curious sensation of pushing off the ground with something that was not her hands washed over her as her very real wings lifted her to her partner. The kiss that followed was the sweetest feeling. The world, the pain, the war, and everything else just dropped away in that moment as they looked into each other's eyes.

They leaned on each other as they rose on shaky legs. Already Vira's accents were returning, her power slowly recovering even after such a grueling spell. Aside from feeling like she had run five miles

uphill, Niox had never felt better. Finally on her feet, the feeling of her wings faded to a dull ache and a whisper of feathers on her back. The hair in her face seemed to glow, as if burning from within.

She took a step and stumbled when her leg did not end where she expected it to. Looking down, she was noticeably larger and considerably more buff. Her wet shirt clung like a second skin to a superhuman physique. That she had boobs of actual size was mind-boggling as she cupped them. Her arms alone were breathtaking in their size and definition, but the rest of her was almost too much to grasp.

The only other humans she had ever seen close to this level were the Arzan Berserkers to the north. Among them were men who could stand toe to toe with a bear and not only survive, but win. She was pretty confident she could take five bears.

Vira's wings flared back to life and she let out a sigh. She looked up at Niox for the first time and her wide-eyed reaction, followed by her licking her lips, was priceless.

“Hey, Em, do you want to see if I can fly, too?”

The cleric simply nodded.

They leaped into the air and into a new world that only they shared.