

## Chapter 1: She Needed to Get Laid

Warm breath running over the tip of her sensitive pointed ear startled her. She would have turned, except a pair of hands curved around her waist and drew her backwards. She should have reacted differently. She should have pulled one of her knives and struggled. Instead she simply leaned into the embrace and felt soft breasts pillow against her back. The faint smell of lavender mixed with steel, and the frosty outdoor scent of Haven surrounded her.

She swallowed hard, her hands lifting to touch the pair at her waist. The tops of Cassandra's fingers were soft, but strong. She'd seen the way they wrapped around a sword, carried a shield. She'd noticed when they clenched in anger, the way they clasped together, or moved when she spoke.

Thoughts of the Seekers hands though soon faded. No, her thought process became completely obliterated when she felt the Seekers mouth caress the shell of her ear. When the Seekers clever tongue flicked over the tip, then followed the path of her mouth. Alva's entire body stiffened, arousal seizing her, clenching her gut and sending heat between her legs. She was wet. Abruptly, embarrassingly, wet. When the Seeker sucked the tip of her ear, Alva moaned loudly, pressing her ass back into the woman.

"Cassandra..."

"I do not know why but, I want you." Cassandra's accent was smallclothes dropping. Alva found her voice ridiculously sexy under normal circumstances. Whispered in her ear in a low, almost seductive tone made desire rip through her so intensely she thought she could come just from the Seeker whispering to her.

Alva whimpered, grasping one of Cassandra's hands and drawing it between her thighs, pressing it against her. "Creators, fuck me. Please just..."

Alva jerked upright, sweating and painfully aroused. Her clit was throbbing, her hips making small jerking movements desperate for stimulation even as consciousness returned. The crackle of the fire in the hearth mingled with the loud sound of her breathing. She was in the straw bed in her cabin. She was in Haven. It was the middle of the night, darkness coating the sky outside her window, except where the breach lit up the darkness with its menacing green taint.

Alva swallowed hard, tossing aside the furs, swinging her feet out of bed and letting them touch the cold floor, a jarring sensation from the heat still coursing through her. She needed it, the cold. Maybe a cold bath too. These dirty dreams she was having about Cassandra were ridiculous. Granted, they were a thousand times better than the nightmares, Alva reasoned, but still.

It had to have been the stress of the situation. One minute accused of being a mass murderer, the next she was a part of an Inquisition with the impossible task of building alliances so she could close a hole in the sky. A hole in the sky. All because of...

Alva looked down at her hand, turning it over. The mark on her palm was ugly. She wasn't vain, she had plenty of scars marking her lithe frame, and she thought herself pretty at best, but the mark was something else entirely. The skin on her palm looked like a horrible burn mark, circular in shape with thin puckered lines running through the middle. It wasn't a reminder of something she had triumphed over. It unnerved her. The power underneath it, and everything it represented.

Alva sighed, her arousal calming somewhat under the reminder. She was restless and she knew she'd never get back to sleep. The Elf stood up, naked, and got half dressed, warm enough to venture out into the chilly Haven air. She left her bow against the wall and strapped her knife belt to her waist instead.

Haven was quiet at this hour. A few lingering voices of the guards on duty, the occasional shadow moving about that Alva was growing accustomed to recognizing as Leliana's spies. She breathed in the cold air, actually liking it for once because it was doing wonders to calm her. She wandered past Seggrit's merchant stand, closed at the late hour of course. She was moving in no real direction simply enjoying a peaceful moment and getting control back of her body when a different sound made her ears perk.

They were grunts. The sound of feet crunching over snow. The low woosh of a weapon cutting through the air. Alva canted her head curiously. There was no accompanying clang of steel or sounds of pain which meant someone was practicing. At this hour? As Alva came closer to the sound near the trebuchets and a form began to take familiar shape she realized she should have turned around when she heard it. Who else. Really, who else would be out at this hour practicing with such dedication then Cassandra.

Alva halted abruptly, all the work she'd done to calm herself down flaring back to life. She should go, she told herself. She should turn around, and walk right back the way she'd came.

Her brain and her body however were not on the same page. Instead her feet refused to move and she was staring. Watching the Seeker's graceful deadly movements, swinging her sword as if fighting an invisible enemy, moving across the snow with speed. Then slower, like she was stalking her prey. Her lips were slightly parted at times, puffs of cold air coming from them. She was sweating, even in the chilly weather, Alva could see the moisture glisten on her neck and immediately wondered what it would feel like, taste like if she licked it off. The thought sent another wave of heat crashing through her and she forced herself not to clench her thighs together. This was dumb. She needed to get laid. Stat.

Alva turned and was ready to depart without interrupting the sudden focus of her desire when the sounds stopped and that stupidly sexy Nevarran voice called out, “Alvaerle?”

Alva swallowed, took a second to ensure her expression was neutral and turned back around. “I apologize. I wasn’t sneaking and didn’t mean to interrupt.”

“Do not apologize, I was simply not expecting anyone to be there,” Cassandra’s tone was matter of fact. She paused, and then tacked on, “Were you unable to sleep?”

Alva simply nodded, and resolutely forced her brain to not send vivid reminders through her head of exactly why that had been. “Some nights after we’ve returned from our outings I sleep like a log. Others...” she shrugged.

Cassandra nodded. “I understand. I... frequently have the same issue.”

Alva paused. Cassandra had not been unfriendly to her, she just wasn’t sure where she stood with the Seeker. Their relationship was one born of necessity, not because either of them really knew or liked one another. Still, despite the fact that for some reason she was having vivid dirty dreams about the Seeker, Alva did want to know more about her companion. “May I ask what keeps you awake at night, Cassandra?”

Cassandra lowered her gaze. She didn’t answer right away, instead sheathing her sword and moving to pick up the shield she had propped up against one of the bases of the half built trebuchet. “Divine Justina was a good woman. A good friend. With all that has happened I have not taken time to properly mourn her death, and now I am unsure how to do so.”

Sympathy colored Alva’s light gray eyes. “I’m sorry, Cassandra. Will there... has there been a funeral?”

Cassandra made a disgusted noise. “Yes. A grand affair in Val Royeaux. Leliana and I both chose not to attend, as our duties here were more pressing. And Justina would have detested the fuss made. We held our own private service in the Chantry here. And I have... taken quiet moments of prayer but, I am not sure if I have fully processed it.”

Alva wanted to take a step closer to the Seeker, to offer comfort but her feet still weren’t moving. She drew her gaze away from Cassandra for a moment, and said quietly, “I know that I am somehow linked to what happened and that may make you... actually I have no idea how you feel about me to be honest but, if there is anything I can do...” Alva said the words quietly, and with a sincerity that surprised her.

Cassandra met her gaze and for a moment looked surprised as if she was just realizing something. “Oh. I suppose... no you probably don’t know do you?” She fell silent again for a brief moment, collecting her words. “I do not know what to think, to be honest. I believe

there is more going on here than we can see and no one cares to do anything about it. They will stand in the fire and complain that it is hot. I know that we need the mark upon your hand, and that it says a great deal about your character that you were willing to help us after everything. I think you are innocent. I know you were not responsible for what happened at the conclave but you were there and..." she trailed off, her brow furrowed.

Alva understood. "...and even if I wasn't responsible I'm a piece of a very complex puzzle that involves the death of a woman you held in high regard. I'm not a murderer but you don't know that I'm not completely guilty either."

Cassandra by turns looked relieved that Alva understood and still stared at her like she was a puzzle the Seeker could not yet figure out. "Yes."

"I want answers too if that's any comfort. And I won't shy away from finding them, even if I don't know whether or not I'll like them. I wasn't at the Conclave to cause trouble, I was there to get information because I was one of the few of my clan who treat people by their individuality not the sins of their race," her mouth quirked. "And I'm particularly good at sneaking around. But, how I went from observer to this..." Alva frowned and looked down at her hand for brief seconds. She finally closed it into a fist to block out the sight. "...I don't know. But I'm going to find out, as sure as we're going to close that hole in the sky."

Cassandra had been watching her intently. After a moment a very faint smile moved her lips, reminding Alva how simply beautiful the Seeker was and abruptly pushing the images of her dream back into her mind. The way her brain had thought it would feel like to have those lips running across her ear –

"Keep that confidence," Cassandra said with a small trace of amusement in her tone. "We will need it in the days to come."

Alva cleared her throat, nodding, looking away from Cassandra again. "I'm going to get back to my cabin. Good night. And, well, thank you for your candor."

"I can easily say the same to you. Good night. Alvaerle."

The Elf turned, forcing herself not to run away from the Seeker, or the eyes she could feel against her back. When she was safely back in her cabin, she tossed another log on the fire, stoking the flames, stripped down completely and laid in her bed. Until she found a willing bed partner (that was not the Seeker) her hand would just have to do.

## Chapter 2: Cassandra's Denial

Hand resting comfortably on the hilt of her blade, her shield strapped secure against her back, a familiar welcome weight, Cassandra strode up the small hill from the old apothecary

cabin she and Commander Cullen were sharing to be closer to the troops. Leliana and Josephine and a few others stayed inside the Chantry with the rest sharing cabins inside of Haven or in the tents that marked the land outside of it where their growing number of their troops found rest.

She strode over to Horse Master Dennett. "Is everything ready for our departure?"

"Aye, Seeker. Be careful about yours, he's a bit fickle in the rain and I hear there's a lot of that in the Storm Coast."

Cassandra nodded. "Let us hope the journey proves worth the trouble. I shall fetch the Herald and we will be on our way."

Near the front gates, ten Inquisition soldiers made their last minute preparations to depart. Varic stood among them, laughing with one of the soldiers. He winked at her as she passed and Cassandra made a disgusted noise in return.

"If you're looking for our dear Herald, I last saw her by Leliana's tent!" Varric called out.

Cassandra ignored him but as she strode through Haven she found herself heeding his advance and moving towards Leliana's tent near the front of the Chantry.

"Wait... I thought you said you were friends with this man once?"

Cassandra heard the Herald's voice and her steps paused. She stood near to the side, certain Leliana could see her, but the Elf had her back to Cassandra.

"He betrayed us. He murdered my Agent," Leliana said, not bothering to disguise the anger in her tone or expression.

"I understand but you'd kill him? Just like that?" Alvaerle asked.

Cassandra quirked a brow, her gaze moving from Leliana's stony gaze on the Herald to the Herald herself.

Leliana folded her arms over her chest, her gaze unwavering from Alvaerle. Cassandra noticed that Leliana's Agent looked extremely uncomfortable, even backing up a step and warily shifting his gaze between the two women.

"You find fault with my decision?" Leliana asked.

Cassandra could not see the expression on the Elf's face but her tone took on a gentler touch. "I think you know exactly what you're doing nine times out of ten, Leliana. But... everyone needs someone to keep them from that one time they're making a mistake."

"A mistake?!" Leliana's tone rose and her arms uncrossed as she took a step towards the Herald. Cassandra's brow ticked in surprise at the Herald's bravery or perhaps foolishness and took a silent step closer wondering if she'd have to intervene. "Butler's betrayal put our Agents in danger." Leliana continued in a strong tone. "I condemn one man to save dozens. I may not like what I do, but it must be done. I cannot afford the luxury of ideals at a time like this."

"Now is exactly the time for ideals!" The Herald who had been leaning against the tent post, suddenly straightened and took her own step towards the Spymaster, leaving very little distance between them. "We won't always get to make decisions that don't chip away pieces of us. I am not naive to what a war like this will do, will force us to do. But, when we can be better, when we can show ourselves, and our people the difference between mercy and cruelty even for those that don't deserve it don't we have too? Isn't that what your Maker teaches Leliana?"

Leliana barked a humorless laugh. "He asks a lot." her quiet tone betrayed a different kind of anger. She studied the Herald in tense silence for a long moment and then turned around back towards her table. She set her hands on it, sighing. "You feel very strongly about this. Very well. I will find another way to deal with this man." She looked at her Agent. "Apprehend Butler. But see that he lives."

The Agent bowed slightly to Leliana, glanced at the Herald and then departed.

"Now if you're happy, I have more work to do. And I believe your party awaits you for your visit to the Storm Coast," Leliana's tone was dismissive.

Cassandra watched the Elf's back go from a determined straight line to a posture that suggested perhaps less confidence. "Leliana..." Alvaerle's voice trailed off. She paused then said quietly, "See you when we get back." The Herald hesitated and then turned around.

Cassandra noted the Herald looked startled to see her there. Alva's eyes dropped to the ground and she moved past Cassandra silently.

Cassandra watched her walk away in a studying sort of silence until she was out of sight. Her gaze turned to the left hand of the Divine, stepping closer to the tent. "I cannot say I am not surprised you yielded."

Leliana sighed again. "So am I. But, I - she knew Nesaris, Cassandra. Met her, briefly months ago."

Cassandra's brows arched in surprise at the mention of the Hero of Ferelden and Leliana's love. She knew her friend had not seen her beloved in nearly a year. "Truly? Is Nesaris well?"

A tiny smile crept onto the Spymaster's mouth. "She is. Though our Herald didn't know anything regarding her quest to cure herself of the Calling, she did say Nes was in good spirits and spoke fondly of her love. Of me."

Cassandra couldn't help but feel warmed by the expression on Leliana's face. It felt like too long since she had seen her friend smile, and if she thought about it she was sure she could say the same for herself. It was difficult to find any joy in times like this. "I am happy to hear that Leliana. Still—"

"She was right Cassandra," Leliana finally turned away from the map on the table and looked at Cassandra. "I have often felt as if I was losing myself to my work without Nes by my side. Losing my faith when Justina died. If the Maker's hand is in this, he did something right sending Alvaerle to us."

Cassandra paused in thoughtful silence. "I have felt the same. She is proving to be precisely what we need, when we needed it."

"I agree. Good luck on our journey. Keep yourself and our Herald safe, Cassandra."

Cassandra nodded and turned to go join their party. As they rode, she found her gaze drawn often towards the Herald, watching as she spoke with soldiers that rode with them, noting that she made a point to speak with each of them in turn and for some time. Cassandra also noticed the Elf gave into her laughter with abandon; it was full and loud, contagious even and Cassandra watched it light up Alvaerle's whole face. The Seeker found the corners of her own mouth twitching involuntarily when she heard it.

When they made camp that night it wasn't Varric who told stories to entertain the men and women but the Herald. Cassandra sat off to one side, going through her nightly ritual of cleaning her blade. Usually she tuned out Varric's grating tone. But Cassandra liked the Herald's voice. It carried a faint accent and tone that Cassandra found pleasing. Relaxing even. At some point she was startled to realize she'd stopped her motions all together and had been watching the Herald for some time.

This knowledge however did not prompt her to begin her ritual again, instead she continued to study the Elf. Watching the way she used her hands when she spoke, the light in her eyes as she told a humorous tale of a hunting trip with her clan gone wrong. It was warmer weather at the foot of the mountain and around the camp fire the Herald had removed her leathers, leaving her in a loose linen shirt though she continued to wear a glove over the hand that bore the mark. Unlike other Elves, her skin tone was a deep tan from her life spent outdoors, and though thin there was strength in her lithe frame. Her vallaslin was an intricate drawing

of tree branches that wrapped around her eyes and forehead, kissing the inside of her cheeks and dipping slightly down her nose. The Herald shaved the sides of her head it looked like, but her hair was long on top, down just past her shoulders, and Cassandra silently noted she liked the way the Elf wore it. It felt... rebellious, proud, and unique.

“She’s a cutie, isn’t she Seeker?” Varric’s low but utterly amused voice brought Cassandra back from her staring.

She blinked at the dwarf who was moving past her on his way to his tent, a knowing gleam in his eyes.

Cassandra rolled her eyes and refused to acknowledge Varric. Instead she abruptly lowered her gaze from the Herald, returning to the task she had forgotten about earlier.

Though it was entirely possible she continued to sneak glances at the Herald and kept one ear attuned to the sound of her voice.

---

Their journey to the Storm Coast had originally been to determine if the offer coming from The Iron Bull and his mercenary company the Chargers was something the Inquisition wanted and to seal the rifts their Scouts had reported seeing along the coast. After reaching the main camp Scout Harding and her group had setup, they learned that several of their scouts had gone missing.

Cassandra had watched the Herald’s brow furrow as Scout Harding gave the situation report, an expression Cassandra was beginning to realize meant the Elf was either worried or displeased, possibly both. She’d listened as the Herald assured Harding they would go looking for the Scouts themselves.

They’d gone to find the Chargers first. And as that day had worn on Cassandra had found the Herald not only liked the near constant rain, but she liked flirting with The Iron Bull too and had proceeded to do so since accepting him and his mercenary company into the Inquisition.

The rest of the day had been long and difficult. They had closed several rifts, and with the help of The Iron Bull’s Chargers they found their missing scouts, unfortunately dead. Cassandra had been angry and so too she had noted, had the Herald. Alvaerle had knelt beside each body and spoken quietly in her native tongue, before vowing to find those who had done this senseless act and bring them to justice for it.

The next morning, they were on their way to challenge the leader of the Blades of Hessarian. Cassandra had heard of them briefly and so had the Herald in her travels. They were

supposedly deeply religious, served Andraste, and whomever was strong enough to lead them.

As they trudged up another cursed hill, the rain falling a bit lighter today, Cassandra watched the Herald smile at some deep rumbling coming from the Qunari. Cassandra frowned, picking up her pace to move closer to the Herald.

She had mixed feelings about the Ben-Hassrath Agent but there was no denying that he and his Chargers were capable warriors who had insofar followed orders and been helpful. Still, she did not trust him completely and she did not like how quickly the Herald had taken to him. It was her job to protect the woman and she would not see her fall victim to some trap laid by a Qunari spy.

As they crested the top of the hill, the Herald paused, tipping her face up into the light rain that was currently falling. Cassandra watched the Elf close her eyes as if she enjoyed the sensation, watched the way the droplets of water ran over her vassallin, down her cheeks and neck and suddenly found herself feeling unexpectedly flushed.

“Damn Boss. If I wasn’t so good at my job I’d be thoroughly distracted right now,” Bull broke the silence, his one eyed gazed on the Herald.

“Bianca’s distracted,” Varric said with no small amount of amusement in his tone.

Cassandra watched the Herald jerk her eyes open and a blush creep onto her cheeks as she realized they were all watching her. “Abelas,” she murmured, and Cassandra thought, not for the first time how pretty the elven dialect sounded coming from the Herald. “Er, sorry.” The Elf corrected in the language they could all understand. She grinned and shrugged, picking back up their pace. “I like the rain.”

Bull and Varric exchanged glances.

“Dangerous and doesn’t even know it,” Varric said.

“That’s the best kind,” Bull moved ahead.

Cassandra rolled her eyes at their banter and pushed past both of them, catching up to the Herald. “Your Worship.”

The Elf turned her gaze onto Cassandra. “You know it’s just us. You can call me by my name.”

“It is not,” Cassandra protested. “The Qunari is not one of us, yet.”

“I heard that, Seeker.” Bull called out in a good natured tone.

Varric’s laughter rang out and Cassandra could not contain the disgusted noise that left her.

The Herald looked amused, but at the same time understanding. She laid a hand on Cassandra’s arm, giving her a slight nod as if she understood the warning that was coming. Cassandra held the Elf’s gaze a moment longer, for what reason she didn’t know before looking away.

The Herald’s hand fell away, their attention drawn towards the outpost they could see in the distance. “That’s it up ahead,” she said. “Remember, we try and solve this peacefully.”

They were able to solve it, semi peacefully.

The leader of the Blades of Hessarian, a stocky brute with a distasteful mouth challenged the Herald to a duel. Cassandra opened her mouth to protest, but the Herald gave her a strong look and against her better judgment, Cassandra remained quiet.

She was tense throughout the short battle, her gaze focused on the Herald, while Iron Bull and Varric kept theirs on the crowd around them. Cassandra found herself holding her breath as Alvaerle dodged one attack after another, countered, and then finally got in close enough with her blades to do real damage. It was over shortly after that, and Cassandra could not recall ever feeling so relieved. She surged forward, checking over the Herald for injury. The Herald brushed aside her concern, gave her a warm smile and moved past her to share a victorious shout with the Iron Bull.

Cassandra watched them with a slight frown, not at all understanding the uncomfortable feeling sitting in her stomach.

---

The mood back at camp that evening was a lively one, as expected after a successful venture, and even the rain had let up. The Blades of Hessarian swore their allegiance to the Herald and thusly the Inquisition. Two of them had accompanied their party back to the main camp to introduce themselves to Scout Hardings men and discuss plans going forward.

Cassandra noted as the evening wore on the Herald enjoyed the mild revelry but was quieter than usual and looked tired. It was late into the evening when the camp had settled and Cassandra found herself almost alone with the Elf.

Neither had said anything to the other for sometime, the Herald mostly chatting with the Iron Bull until he’d called it a night and retired to the large tent he shared with the rest of his chargers.

Cassandra sat sharpening her blade, stealing glances towards the Herald several times. Finally she said quietly, "You fight very well."

The Herald seemed brought out of some deeper thought and turned her attention to Cassandra, offering a smile at the compliment and Cassandra silently noted how the expression made the woman's eyes crinkle slightly at the corners. "I worked hard at it. I was a terrible fighter at first."

"Truly? I would have thought it came naturally to you."

The Elf shook her head. "I didn't want to hurt anything so I resisted. I was..." she looked away, towards the tree line that surrounded them. "...in love with forest in a sense. I felt very connected to it and the energy it gave off. It was very beautiful to me. Very peaceful. I couldn't understand violence. I didn't even like hunting as silly as that was."

Cassandra had slowed her motions, they were almost automatic now, her eyes on the Elf. She was amused by the story, attempting to reconcile the image presented of the Herald's past self with the woman that sat before her now. "As distasteful as it can be, it is too often necessary."

The Elf drew her gaze back. Cassandra felt... not uncomfortable. She was not in fact certain how she felt under the Herald's intense eyes. Studied perhaps. Weighed. Like the woman was trying to see through her, find some deeper truth. "Yes," Alvaerle finally said. "You speak like someone who has led a violent life."

Cassandra stopped sharpening her sword, lapsing into brief thought. She'd never considered it that way. She had though, hadn't she? Even if Anthony had lived... thinking about her brother brought about that sharp, breathless pain in her heart. She dropped her gaze to her task and continued sharpening her blade. "Do you still feel that way about the forest?"

The Herald didn't answer right away, and Cassandra could feel the elf's eyes back on her. "Yes, at times. I don't like why we must take these trips but I do enjoy being out in the world."  
“

Cassandra drew her eyes back to the Herald. "What happened? If I may ask? That made you learn to fight?"

The Elf looked away, past the others in camp towards the forest that surrounded them, a distant look in her eyes. There was sadness there that Cassandra recognized on an instinctive level. Alvaerle had lost someone she cared about. A fiercely protective instinct welled up inside Cassandra, unexpected in its intensity.

“How we want the world to be, and the face it shows us can be hard to reconcile sometimes. Anyway, a story for another time.” The Elf gave her a small smile, and stood up. “Goodnight, Seeker.”

Cassandra watched her rise, refusing to over think her reaction towards the woman. “Rest well, Herald.” She kept her gaze on the woman’s back as Alvaerle moved towards their tent and hurried to add, “Alvaerle -”

There was a rather long pause Cassandra thought briefly strange before the Elf twisted her body enough to look over her shoulder, her brow quirked in question.

“Should you ever need to speak of it,” Cassandra let the rest of the sentence hang, certain the Elf caught her meaning.

Cassandra watched the Herald swallow, an unreadable expression coming into her eyes. Finally her lips quirked into another faint smile and she nodded at Cassandra and made her way into their tent.

Cassandra was unsure what to make of the expression. Only that it made her want.. Cassandra shook her head, refusing to finish that thought and returned to her task.

---

*A warm body was molded to her back, soft lips pressed against the back of her neck. A hand slipped underneath the thin linen shirt she wore, boldly cupping her breast, squeezing, making Cassandra whimper quietly and arch into the touch.*

*“You make me feel safe,” a low, slightly accented voice whispered against her skin, and Cassandra felt those lips parting, slow open mouthed kisses moving across the side of her neck, leaving her struggling to bite back her moan. “What do I make you feel?” the voice whispered.*

*“Confused,” Cassandra whispered huskily, reaching her hand back to bury her fingers in the silken threads of long hair. “I do not know what to make of these feelings.”*

*“Do you like them?” The voice was at her ear, teeth on the lobe making her shiver. The soft hand glided down from her breasts, tracing the muscles in her stomach, and slowly untying the laces of her breeches.*

*Cassandra found it impossible to think, anticipation coiling hotly in her gut. “Yes,” She breathed and then she lost the ability to breathe entirely, when those fingers slipped beneath and cupped her sex. “I want..”*

*“My name, Seeker.” A soft kiss was pressed to the spot just behind her ear. “Say it.” Cassandra felt a fingertip graze across her clit and gave voice to her quiet moan. “Alvaerle-”*

Cassandra’s eyes opened and she jerked upright in her bedroll. She was breathing heavily, her smallclothes were soaked with her arousal, her breasts felt tight and achy underneath the

breast band she still wore. She quickly glanced to her right and saw that the Herald was still sleeping. It did nothing to cool her arousal though as she noticed the way the Elf's lips slightly parted in her sleep, how beautiful, peaceful she looked, an expression that made Cassandra want to leave her bedroll and go-

Go what? Had she gone mad? Cassandra bit back a disgusted noise at herself. As quietly as possible she got up and got dressed, pulling back the flap and stepping out into a light, chilly morning rain.

For once she appreciated it and Cassandra stood still underneath the steady rainfall to let it cool her heated skin. It was working, slightly. Though she still felt... achy. It was simply timing, she reasoned. It had been long, perhaps too long since she had been with anyone. The stress of the past weeks, the previous days battle, she was simply having a reaction. She did not, under any circumstance want the Herald. The idea was ridiculous. She'd never been attracted to a woman before in her life. She simply liked the Herald. She liked the Herald a great deal if she was honest with herself. The woman was kind, willing to take charge when need be, a fierce and capable fighter, and there was a depth to her that Cassandra found intriguing. That did not mean she was attracted. No. She was just... tense. All she needed was a private moment and perhaps one of her smutty books and she would be fine. Thankfully, they would journey back to Haven today.

Feeling more in control of herself, Cassandra moved away from the tent to rouse the rest of their party and begin their preparations to return to Haven.

### **Chapter 3: Realization, Rejection, and Comfort Sex**

#### *Skyhold*

Alvaerle, Inquisitor instead of just the Herald of Andraste (both titles she found overwhelming at times) pulled her cloak about her as a chilly wind whipped across the battlements where she stood, watching below as Cassandra and Cullen worked with a group of new recruits in the courtyard.

She found herself smiling as she watched Cassandra giving instruction, a still unexpected warmth filling her chest. The sensation kept taking her by surprise though at this point it was becoming more and more common, forcing Alva to come to a problematic conclusion; she had feelings for the Seeker that went well beyond simple attraction.

She pressed gloved fingers to her temple, resigned, happy, terrified, enthralled, and disgusted with herself that despite her best efforts she could not rid herself of this attraction and now she wasn't sure she wanted too because it was so much more than that. It wasn't her fault, it was a culmination of events that had just... given birth to these feelings.

The first came after Redcliff when their plan to capture Alexius had gone a bit awry. Being sent forward into time had been jarring enough but to have seen the chaos, the raw, merciless destruction that had been left in it's wake still shook Alvaerle to her core.

But it was the the fate a failed future had for her companions that had made everything worse...

---

She moved silently across the dirty stone floor, using the fallen piece of stone in the middle of the walkway to give her a boost. Alva vaulted off it and onto the back of the startled guard, plunging her dagger into his neck, cutting off his ability to scream and warn any others. Next to her Dorian had cracked his staff across the skull of the other, a quick blast of his magic and the guard shared his comrades fate.

"We have to get back, Dorian," Alva whispered as they passed by yet another cell full of red lyrium. After seeing and speaking with Fiona moments before nausea rolled through her stomach to think that once upon a time the lyrium inside these cells had been a person. She dared not let her thoughts drift towards speculating who.

"I know. We will with a little luck. And a little magic. Both of which I have," Dorian offered her a smile in attempt to lighten the grim reality of their situation but Alva saw the fear and disgust in his own eyes. Still a warm fondness bloomed in her chest that he would even try under the circumstances.

As they crept towards another cell block, Alva's acute sense of hearing picked up someone reciting the chant of light. The voice was familiar but... wrong. The pitch of tone much like Fiona's had been. Dread seized Alvaerle. Without explaining to Dorian she surged ahead, faster than they had been moving before, charging through the door without bothering to check for another pair of guards. There were none, but their absence was hardly noteworthy. A loud distressed sound tumbled from Alvaerle's mouth when she saw who was inside the first cell. Cassandra.

The Seeker was on her knees and her hands must have been clasped together in prayer in front of her because Alvaerle couldn't see them. Instead the red lyrium surrounded the front of Cassandra's body, her neck, face and back exposed though not by much. Cassandra stared sightless at the lyrium, and simply kept repeating the chant of light.

"Cassandra... Cassandra no..." Alva grabbed hold of the cell door in a desperate grip, despair and helplessness clawing at her. "Dorian... Dorian get it open. Please."

Cassandra suddenly stopped speaking, turning her head slightly so her gaze rested outside of her cell. Shock registered on her face, but then that slipped away and she closed her red

tinted eyes instead. "I am hallucinating again... be gone apparition! I beg you. Torture me with the sight of our beloved Herald no longer."

Tears slipped down Alva's cheeks at Cassandra's words.

"Step back dear," Dorian urged her and when Alva finally complied a blast of lightning hit the cell lock.

The moment she heard the click, Alva pushed Dorian out of the way, desperate to get to Cassandra. She flung open the cell door and came forward, the sight of the Seeker becoming blurred by her tears as she took in the full extent of the woman's torture. Cassandra's back was covered in baldly healed and in some cases, not healed at all whip marks. Bruises marking the portions of her sides Alva could see. She tried to swallow back the lump in her throat, dashing the tears from her eyes and then tenderly touched Cassandra's face and the Seeker's eyes opened at the unexpected touch. "I'm not here to torture you Cassandra. I'm real. I'm alive. We were sent forward into time. We didn't die. I'll fix this, I swear to Mythal I'll fix this. I won't ever let them do this to you. I won't. I won't..."

Cassandra just stared at her, as if she couldn't comprehend. After a long moment she drew in a painful wheezing breath and pressed her cheek against Alva's hand. Her gaze suddenly looked sharper, a touch more like herself. "If my mind does not deceive me, then the Maker has not abandoned us. I would wish to see this world made right again before I die. And I would wish to see you, Alvaerle."

---

The clanging of metal and Cullen's bark for a man to use his shield properly pulled Alvaerle pulled back from that memory that still made a cold shiver run through her. She took a breath, grounding herself in the present, focusing her gaze back on Cassandra in the training yard below. Healthy. Alive.

They had grown closer after Redcliff. It had just... happened. Fighting side by side, spending so much time in close proximity, learning about each other, discovering a shared love of poetry and certain books. The closeness had done nothing to cool her desire for the other woman, and when it got to be too much Bull had always been willing to take care of her. The rough passionate sex with him had taken the edge off. But it had only been a temporary fix.

After Haven had been destroyed and they'd come to Skyhold, Alva had stopped her trysts with Bull because they no longer helped. The night of Haven's demise, when she'd almost died herself had made her realize her attraction to the Seeker wasn't just physical.

It had been the thought of Cassandra, of what would happen to the Seeker if they failed, if she failed that had made Alva fight through the blizzard that night. That had been the only

thought in her mind as she battled the freezing temperatures, her own wounds, and exhaustion literally to her breaking point. She remembered how she'd started cursing when her body had given her up on her and she'd collapsed into the snow. Things after that were still a bit fuzzy. She remembered seeing Cassandra's face as she blacked in and out. She remembered hearing Cassandra's soft voice in prayer beside her, while Dorian and Solas worked to heal and warm her. She remembered Cassandra's face being the first thing she'd seen when she'd finally awoken, and the fierce wordless hug the Seeker had given her. And Alva remembered acutely how she hadn't wanted Cassandra to ever let go.

Alva dropped her fingers from her temple, her gaze refocusing on the reason she was reminiscing so in the first place.

She needed to tell Cassandra. She didn't know if the Seeker felt the same. She had no idea if Cassandra was even attracted to women, attracted to her. But she would go mad if she kept this bottled up inside of her for another moment. Her resolve steeled (nervously so) she got the Seeker's attention with the wave of her arms and motioned for the woman she come see her.

---

“Is it so terrible that I want you?”

Alva had moved to a more private section of the battlements, where those below couldn't peek up and see them with any ease. Her attempt at confessing her desire to court Cassandra, that the flirting actually meant something was not going as planned. Not that she had had a plan but..

Cassandra's brow furrowed. “It's impossible. You're the Inquisitor. The Heard of Andraste and... a wom-”

She couldn't hear it. She didn't want to hear it. She reacted on instinct. Alva surged forward, curving her hands around the Seeker's face and pressed her lips against Cassandra's. When Cassandra did not draw back immediately, Alva softened her attack. She rubbed her lips gently back and forth across the Seeker's as if she loved the texture of the other woman's mouth (she was starting to think she would). She kissed each corner. She traced her tongue over Cassandra's lower lip, then let her lips caress the Seeker's, each motion slow. A back and forth. A soft sensual circular motion.

She finally drew back before she forgot herself, lowering her hands. Cassandra's breathing was deep. The Seeker looked stunned, at a loss for words, and underneath all that confusion Alva recognized sparks of desire. Seeing it made her own need rip through her, made her want to kiss Cassandra again.

Instead, she stepped backwards the sting of Cassandra's rejection filling up the space between them. "A woman. Yes, I am," Alva said quietly, her tone a touch husky. "You don't have to be attracted to all women Cassandra you can just be attracted to one. Me. And you should know..." Alva swallowed, and forged ahead before she lost her nerve, "I don't just want you for the physical. I want you. I want to court you. I think..." her voice almost shook as she forced herself to get past her nervousness at admitting such things aloud and continue. "...I could love you, Cassandra Pentaghast."

Cassandra said nothing, her mouth open, then closed but she truly looked at a loss for words. Alva noticed the woman's beautiful hazel eyes shifting from Alva's gaze to her mouth and back but the Seeker took a step back putting more space between them.

Alva folded her arms over her chest in a protective gesture. "I'm sorry, I shouldn't have kissed you. If you mean it, truly that you're not attracted to women, to me I won't flirt with you again, Seeker. You have my word." Alva turned around and quickly walked away.

---

Alva sat on the steps just past the Herald's Rest. She had a bottle of Mackay's Epic Single Malt in her hand and was drinking straight from it. The the usual sounds of Skyhold swirled about, more muted in the common areas at the late hour, though a bit louder coming from the left where the tavern was.

After a time, her sensitive ears picked up his heavy steps before the bulk of his frame lowered itself next to her. Bull didn't say anything right away, instead he just sat next to her in silence.

His silent understanding was so dear to her at times. Alva scooted closer and he wordlessly put his arm around her shoulders as she pressed into his side. She took another swig from the bottle, and then offered it to him. He took it.

"So, we head out tomorrow," he finally said in his smooth, rumbling tone. "Field time will do you good. Clear your head. Get you away from here."

Alva considered that and nodded slightly. "It will be a week or more before we can confirm the Wardens are at Adamant. We can make a short run of things in the meantime."

"You, me, the Chargers. Dorian and Varric?"

"Sounds perfect," Alva took the bottle back from him, taking another healthy swallow. She'd nearly finished it and she was a lightweight, already the liquor had made her head heavy. It wasn't doing what she wanted though. It wasn't making her numb. It wasn't making her

forget. It wasn't helping, it was heightening the pain that snuck in, the sting of rejection hitting her harder than she had anticipated. "Does everyone know?" she asked abruptly.

"Don't think so. But you've been moody for days and you're never moody, not like this."

Alva sighed, pressing the bottle against her forehead. She didn't want the gossiping to start. She didn't want to deal with it. She didn't want Cassandra to have to deal with it. She had to get her shit together. She needed...

She looked up at Bull. "Can I have you tonight? Would Dorian mind?"

"He wouldn't mind." Bull looked at her, his often times amused and mischievous gaze taking on a more serious note. "You sure you want that, Boss?"

She didn't want him, as wonderful as he was, not really. She wanted... Alva tipped back the bottle, swallowing down the remainder in a long gulp. She tossed it carelessly aside, ignoring the loud crack as it rolled down the steps and climbed into Bull's lap, putting her arms around his neck and pressing against him. She rubbed her cheek against his, whispering, "Shut up and fuck me, Bull. I don't want to feel anything but you."

She didn't remember the trip back to her quarters, only that she started pulling off her clothes as she climbed the stairs. Bull was at her back, helping her, distracting her with his large hands on her breasts, his open mouth on her neck, his teeth and tongue on her skin making her moan shamelessly.

He didn't put her on the bed, instead he slammed her roughly back against the wooden door next to it. It hurt, knocked the breath out of her, and made her wetter. She climbed up him, her arms tight around his neck, her legs around his waist. Their lips collided hard, passionately, his tongue licking deeply inside of her mouth.

He pushed inside of her abruptly, and she ripped her mouth away from his to give voice to her loud cry of pleasure. "Yes. Fuck me. Harder. Harder please."

She was pulled away from the door, his cock slipping out of her wet heat so he could bend her over the bed. Alva went easily, lifting her ass to him eagerly, squeezing her eyes shut. "I don't want to think, Bull, I just want-"

Cassandra. To feel loved. To be a woman again not an idea. To forget that she was apparently the most powerful woman in Thedas and the one thing she wanted, she couldn't have.

Bull grabbed her by the hips and sunk back inside of her with one smooth stroke. He was far too big for her to take him all, but she took enough and the pleasure blocked out everything

else for a while. He fucked her wildly, hard and fast, slapped the cheek of her ass, and told her how good she felt around his cock.

She appreciated that in this moment he treated roughly, like a whore even. She gripped the furs that covered her bed with one hand, her cheek pressed against her arm, her shameless cries echoing throughout the chamber. Her other hand reached between her legs, finding her clit and stroking it furiously, sending her pleasure spiraling.

“Yes, yes... don’t stop. Don’t you dare stop.”

He grunted his reply and feed her a little more of his huge length. When her orgasm finally ripped through her, her neck snapped back, technicolor flashing behind her eyes with it’s intensity. Her lips parted, and before she even knew it a name carried itself out of her mouth around her breathless moans. “Cassandra!”

#### **Chapter 4: Maker, did she?**

Cassandra hesitated. She had stepped towards the door and moved away almost a dozen times now. Though the main hall was empty at the late hour she worried someone would see her loitering about in front of the door to the Inquisitor’s chambers.

She had a book of poetry in her hand that she wished to share, and knew the Inquisitor preferred the evening hours. Truly, she wondered if perhaps she should not visit Alvaerle just yet. She had heard wagging tongues on her way across the courtyard, the comment that the Inquisitor looked forlorn. She only hoped she was not the reason. But, Cassandra felt like she needed to talk to the Inquisitor. To reaffirm their friendship. At the very least to let the elf know how flattered she was that Alva felt that strongly about her, and that she wasn’t upset about the kiss.

The kiss.

Cassandra felt herself flush and promptly cleared her throat as if that would help. She refused, flatly to think about her reaction to the kiss. It had been a charged moment, Alva was a dear friend and she had... not been kissed at all in sometime. And never with such...

Cassandra shook her head as if to clear it. No, those thoughts were foolish. Squaring her shoulders she pushed open the door. She climbed the first flight of stairs and rounded the walkway. Just as she was lifting her hand to knock, sounds echoing out from inside the chamber stayed her hand. At first, her body tensed in combat readiness and she was ready to charge in – but then... Sweet Andraste there was no mistaking it, the sound was a moan. The Inquisitor was moaning. Loudly.

Cassandra felt the heat in her cheeks rise again, her body responding instinctively to the sounds. She knew she should step away and respect the Inquisitor's privacy, not remain standing there like some perverse cretin. Her brain's logic was not translating to her feet. Instead of backing away she felt herself moving closer to the door, until her ear was nearly pressed against it. It sounded like a fiercely passionate coupling and she was... not at all sure how she felt about it. The Inquisitor had said her interest was more than just physical but if that were true then surely not just a few days after-

"Cassandra!"

Cassandra startled. Her knees went weak, and it was the first time she'd experienced the sensation outside of battle fatigue. She pressed her hand against the door to keep from falling over, struggling to suppress an unexpected whimper. She had never, not in all her years, heard her name called out like that. There was... Maker, there was such longing wrapped around the passion in her tone. Arousal ripped through Cassandra sharp and burning, making thought difficult.

If she was honest with herself, she had felt the same way on the battlements when the Inquisitor kissed her.

No, when Alvaerle had kissed her.

Cassandra licked her lips, shutting her eyes. The elf was coupling with someone else, thinking about her. Thinking about her so strongly that she'd called out...

*Oh.*

Jealousy suddenly curled through Cassandra. Jealousy and envy. Would she be able to make Alva cry out in such a way if, it was her hands and mouth on her? Cassandra's fingers curled against the door every part of her suddenly and fiercely aching with the need to find out. She wanted to be there, in place of whomever that was, she wanted to - startling realization flooded Cassandra's arousal fogged brain. Maker did she?

She could not face Alvarele, not now. Cassandra jumped back from the door as if it had tried to attack her, turned on her heel and marched out.

### **Chapter 5: Perhaps she acted rashly...**

*The intensity of light gray eyes, the way they focused on her with such intent made her shiver. She could feel wetness beginning to stain her small clothes, and though she desperately wanted them off she feared moving. Feared that if she breathed too loudly, or if she stood up from her table this vision would leave her to her solitude. To her heavy thoughts and worries, and she wanted none of that right now, what she wanted..*

*Alvaerle, a name Cassandra thought beautiful, reached behind her and locked the door. She drew her tongue over her bottom lip and Cassandra felt her own lips part, wanting to feel that sensation on her own mouth.*

*"You're delightful, Cassandra, do you know that?" The elf pushed off the door and walked across the small room, not stopping until she'd put herself in Cassandra's lap, straddling her. "I object. I am not-" But Cassandra couldn't finish her sentence, far too distracted by feeling of the elf in her lap.*

*"You are," Alva whispered in a low seductive tone that made Cassandra instinctively shiver. "I do not... I did not think I was... attracted to women," Cassandra admitted, even as her hands framed the elf's waist.*

*"Do you want me to stop?" Alva whispered, leaning forward and tenderly kissing the scar on Cassandra's left cheek. Cassandra's breath caught, and then abruptly turned into a whimper she could not hold back when Alva's tongue gently traced the scar. "Would you prefer poetry instead?" Alva moved her mouth so their lips barely touched, so Cassandra could feel her breath and the tease of movement as the elf spoke. "Already rejoicing, I begin to love, for I am made better by one who is, beyond dispute the best a woman ever saw or heard."*

*Cassandra felt like she couldn't breathe, her hips were slightly squirming in her chair, her breasts felt overly sensitive against the restraints of the breastband, and Alva's words made her groan in delight. "That was..." Her thought process completely derailed again when Alva's hand was somehow underneath her shirt. Somehow she was no longer wearing a breastband and the elf's warm touch was upon her breast, cupping it's weight, her thumb dragging across Cassandra's nipple.*

*"What do you want, Cassandra?" Alva whispered against her mouth.*

*"Kiss me," Cassandra moaned. "By the Maker, please kiss-"*

Cassandra's eyes opened to the early light of dawn coming in through the window. Her breath was heavy and her body felt achy, warm, and overly sensitive. Cassandra groaned and put her hands over face, shaking it back and forth. She should not be surprised about the nature of her dreams. Not after hearing the Inquisitor in her chambers the night before. Not after spending the evening with the elf the sole thing on her mind, trying to come to any type of solution to her sudden problem. She could not understand the change in herself, or why the elf affected her in such a manner. The night had brought no answers, only longing.

Cassandra sighed, dropping her hands and sat up. She got out of bed, moving over to the wash bin and splashed the cool water on her face. The fire in the hearth in the room had died down, but she did not mind the chilly air in her current state.

It was because of Alvaerle that she had claimed and sometimes used this chamber on the battlements that overlooked the gardens. Though Cassandra often liked the armory and spent a great deal of time there the noise did not do well for long conversations on books or the other enjoyments she and the Inquisitor shared.

The thought gave her pause. When had this friendship blossomed into something more? Is that truly what she wanted? She could no longer deny she was attracted to the elf, but giving

into a night of passion would never be enough for her. Yet, had Alvaerle not told her she could love her?

Cassandra groaned at herself, a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach that she had perhaps made a mistake. She could not solve this dilemma on her own any longer. She needed a friends council.

---

“I do not understand her Leliana. I do not understand these things.” Cassandra paced in a frustrated line in front of Leliana, wringing her hands together as she did so.

Leliana watched her friend with no small amount of amused patience in her studying eyes. “What don’t you understand Cassandra?”

Cassandra continued her pacing for seconds more, her brow knitted together. Leliana did not interrupt the silence and finally Cassandra began rambling. “I do not understand how she can claim to have feelings for me that are not purely... purely physical in nature and then... couple with someone else!”

Leliana lifted a brow at this revelation. “And how is it you know that the Inquisitor was having sex after you rejected her?”

Cassandra stopped pacing, her cheeks heating in embarrassment. She briefly met Leliana’s amused but always calculating stare and then turned her back on her friend. She gripped the railing, looking at the crows. “I... It was not right after. It was several days later. Yesterday evening. I... I went to her quarters to share a book and determine if she was... okay with...” she couldn’t bring herself to say the word rejection. “...and I heard her.”

“I see.” Leliana sounded amused still. She didn’t rise from her chair though, but kept her gaze on her friends back. “Cassandra if you do not share the Inquisitor’s affections for you, why do you care?”

Cassandra closed her eyes, head hanging between her shoulders for a moment. The silence strung out before she all but whispered, “I think perhaps I acted rashly. I... never considered that I might be attracted to another woman. That I might have... feelings that were... not strictly friendship.”

Leliana was silent for a moment before she stood up, walking next to Cassandra and leaning her arms against the railing. “When things hurt some people will do things to make them forget. Perhaps that is what you caught our Inquisitor doing; drowning out the pain of your rejection in the arms of someone else.”

Cassandra felt her hands tightening around the railing as a hot streak of jealousy tore through her again. Guilt followed closely at its heels. She did not want to think that she had hurt Alva so badly. But truly how could she not have? Cassandra recalled clearly the look in the elf's eyes, the tone of her voice as she'd bravely admitted how she felt even after Cassandra had shot her down with... reasons.

Cassandra looked up at Leliana imploring. "You love the Hero of Ferelden. How could I possibly start a relationship with the head of the Inquisition? The Herald of Andraste? In the middle of..." Cassandra waved a hand to indicate their situation.

Leliana smiled at her, touching her friend's arm. "I think perhaps the greater question is if you care for her Cassandra, how can you not? You are the Hero of Orlais. You know the weight she carries. Do you wish her to find her comfort, to be just a woman, in someone else's arms or your own?"

Cassandra was silent for sometime. She finally groaned, leaning her forearms against the railing and pressed her forehead against one of her palms. "How could I have not known this about myself?"

A rare laugh left Leliana. "People draw out different things in us. You don't need to over think it."

Cassandra lifted her head to look at her friend with a sincere expression. "Thank you, Leliana. I must go and speak to the Inquisitor."

"You will have time to deliberate further over your new found feelings. She rode out this morning with The Iron Bull, the Charges, Dorian and Varic."

Cassandra's face fell at hearing the news. "Oh..." she felt it again, that uncomfortable tension curling around her stomach, tightening her shoulders. There had been rumors the Inquisitor and Bull sometimes... had he been the one in her room the past evening? Logic fled Cassandra's mind. He could not have her! Did he know who the Inquisitor's favorite Poet was, and how much she loved the forest, and what a kind, truly gentle person she was, and how beautiful she looked when she-

"Have faith Cassandra," Leliana said, reading her friend's expression and interrupting her thoughts. "But, when she returns I would not wait too long before you act."

Cassandra nodded at Leliana and excused herself. She had much to think about and more to do.

## **Chapter 6: Swords and Shields - Cassandra Style**

It was four days later before the Inquisitor returned. Hawke and Alistar had confirmed that the Wardens had taken over Adamant and Erimond had been seen going inside the fortress.

When the Inquisitor arrived in the courtyard, Cassandra was on the walkway outside of Cullen's office. Her heart hammered in her chest as she watched Alvaerle dismount, and the unfamiliar bite of jealousy coiled inside of her gut when the Iron Bull leaned close and said something to the elf that made her throw back her head with laughter. Cassandra watched the Inquisitor give the Qunari a fond look and touch his arm, the same kind of smile given to Dorian before Josephine and Cullen walked over and the Alva was whisked away to the war room.

Cassandra paced along the battlements. Should she go to her now? Wait until after they had gone to Adamant? While the first thought brought another round of nervous excitement the latter didn't feel right. She should not wait, Cassandra realized. Too many things could happen in the time in between, the moment could be lost. No, Cassandra reaffirmed, turning to head into the castle, this needed to be done and she would do it.

---

Cassandra leaned against the broken stone wall in the hallway that led to the war room. There were many repairs that still needed to be done throughout the castle, this area was next on a very long list.

The doors to the War Room finally opened, and Cassandra's full attention was drawn to it. She nodded a greeting Cullen and Josephine and tried to ignore the knowing glance Leliana gave her as she continued down the hallway, speaking with Josephine. Cassandra noted that the Inquisitor did not emerge. She hesitated but for a breath of a moment, and then pushed forward, entering the room.

Alva was standing in front of the large table that held a map of Thedas, the surface covered with markers of various areas of import, her hands placed on the table's edge. Cassandra took in the line of the Inquisitor's back, the square of her shoulders as she contemplated the map. Thinking of the battle ahead no doubt.

"Inquisitor," Cassandra called out gently. "May I have a word?"

Alva was silent for a moment and Cassandra feared the woman would send her away. Finally she said quietly, "Of course Seeker Pentaghast."

It was such a formal way to address her. Cassandra did not like it, but she could not blame the other woman. She had hurt the elf with her rejection, Cassandra realized again. The knowledge brought a tightness in her chest and a wildly protective instinct to make it right.

Cassandra shut the door to the War Room and moved behind Alvaerle. She felt, not at all in control of her own body, felt like something other than her brain was dictating her motions and she surrendered to it, giving into the urge she'd had many, many times and pressed her face against the elf's hair, nuzzling against it's softness and drawing in her scent.

She felt Alva stiffen at the sudden unexpected nearness. "Cassandra?"

"Turn around Alvaerle. Please," Cassandra implored in a soft tone that sounded a touch husky to her own ears.

She was so close she felt the shiver that went down Alva's spine. Cassandra backed up just a step and slowly, Alva turned around. Cassandra met the elf's confused, searching gaze. Without hesitation she wrapped her arms around Alva, drawing the other woman close, cradling her. For a moment Alva was stiff in her arms, and Cassandra feared she would be pushed away. It lasted but a heartbeat though, and when finally Alva raised her arms to close lightly around Cassandra's back desire seized the Seeker, coiling hotly in her gut. Warmth flooded her chest again, and without consciousness thought she tightened her arms around Alva, drawing her closer.

"Cassandra?" Alva asked again, her tone quiet.

Cassandra understood the question in her tone. "I know the upcoming battle must weight on you," Cassandra began and turned her head just enough so that she could murmur in Alva's ear, "I would be the one to comfort you when you need it. To hold you like this, when the weight of what you must do wears on you."

Alva trembled in her arms, and Cassandra felt a thrill that she could effect the Inquisitor so strongly. Alva pulled back enough that she could look at Cassandra. Cassandra saw clearly the confusion still in Alva's grey eyes, her expression guarded. She opened her mouth as if to speak -

"I could love you, Alvaerle Lavellan," Cassandra interrupted, because she needed to say it, had to tell the Inquisitor how she felt right then. "Truly, I think I must."

Cassandra watched what could only be shock spread across Alva's face, her features tightening, her eyes becoming glassy.

"Alvaerle..." Cassandra whispered the word reverently and pressed her lips against the elf's. The Seeker almost moaned at the way the elf melted into her, and then she just couldn't move slowly. She wanted... felt like she had wanted this woman her entire life and been denied and now...

Anything that had been on the table crashed to the floor as Cassandra lifted Alva and put her on the table. The elf seized Cassandra's face between her hands, her lips parted and hot, her tongue teasing Cassandra's lips, pressing deeper into her mouth. Cassandra sucked on the elf's tongue and Alva moaned loudly.

"You're what I want," Alvaerle whispered against Cassandra's lips. "All I could want. Cassandra-

The sound of her name in that breathless tone drew a shiver down Cassandra's spine. She found the Inquisitor's clothes to be a nuisance, one that she divested the other woman of, handily. She touched Alva's breast and the feel of the elf's soft skin in her battle worn hands, the soft whimper Alva made, left Cassandra hopelessly wet. Her arousal spiked higher when she saw the look of pure pleasure on the Inquisitor's face and knew that she was the cause of it. Cassandra bent her head, her lips parted as they dragged over Alva's breast. She used her tongue on the elf's nipples, listening as her lover's breath caught. Greedily, Cassandra covered the peak with her lips and began to suck.

Alva moaned loudly again, her hands fisting in Cassandra's hair. "Cassandra wait... I... oh, fuck. My room... my-

"No," Cassandra whispered huskily against Alva's breast. "I will wait no longer. I will have you... love you now." She pressed her hand between the elf's legs, cupping her sex intimately, and a touch possessively. She could not deny that the memory of the Inquisitor coupling with the Iron Bull had not briefly run into her mind, and she was determined regardless of her inexperience with a woman to make Alvaerle feel the same pleasure with her.

Alva cried out, her hips jerking towards the Seeker's hand. "I... Cassandra I've wanted you... too much... I'll come so fast if you keep... that up."

It thrilled Cassandra to no end that her usually articulate Inquisitor could barely form a sentence and the hot little sounds she made in between each word made Cassandra feel utterly ravenous to have her. She had had, only one other partner and she had never wanted him like this. "Then I will simply have to make you come again after the first," Cassandra whispered. She drew a finger between Alva's folds, her head raising to press her lips against the arched column of the elf's throat. It was Cassandra's turn to moan against her lover when she felt how wet Alva was. She pressed her finger inside, the tip of her thumb grazing against Alva's clit. The elf began panting against her, her hips rocking helplessly into her motions.

"Blessed Mythal, yes... don't stop. Please... Cassandra I need you."

Cassandra lifted her head, because she found she loved watching the elf's face in her passion. Alva was beautiful, breathtaking really with her lips swollen from the Seeker's kisses, parted to give voice to her pleasure, her eyes hooded with desire, snapping closed when sensation

overcame her. Cassandra added a second finger, and began pumping them rhythmically inside of her lover.

“I won’t last... Cassandra...” Alvaerle curled her fingers against the back of Cassandra’s neck, claiming her mouth in a searing kiss, lips parted and messy with the passionate sounds she kept making every time Cassandra’s fingers plunged inside of her. It was heady to be inside the other woman, Cassandra mused in a passionate haze and knowing what she herself liked she curled her fingers so very slightly upwards, until the tips rubbed against the rough sensitive bundles of nerves inside her lover. Alvaerle’s breathy moans suddenly turned into a shout of pleasure, the other woman’s hips rolling in a hard, sensuous motion against Cassandra’s fingers. She felt her lovers inner walls tighten around her fingers, Alvaerle’s nails suddenly digging into her shoulders, her back, loud helpless moans and whimpers falling from the elf’s lips as she came.

“Cassandra... yes... yes... I love you. Creators, I love you.”

Cassandra shivered, unable to contain her own reaction or the quiet whimper that left her. A deep sense of satisfaction and another wave of possessiveness washed over her. She brought Alvaerle down slowly, finally easing her fingers out of her lover.

Alvaerle, still panting, her eyes hooded with desire reached down, taking hold of Cassandra’s hand. Keeping her eyes on her lover, the elf brought that hand to her mouth, sucking on the fingers that had been inside of her. Cassandra’s breathing flared. She would have not thought such a gesture to be so arousing but it was.

Slowly, Alvaerle drew those fingers from her mouth. “My turn. Take me to bed, Cassandra. I’m going to spend the time before this battle doing nothing but loving you.”

---

She was so beautiful, Alvaerle thought watching her lover sleeping. Somehow they managed to make it from the war room into her chambers. Cassandra was sprawled out in bed next to her, the blankets mostly around her waist, one of her legs peeking out from underneath the furs. Her back was exposed to Alva and the sight of the seekers skin so close to her was far too tempting to ignore.

They didn’t have much time before they would have to rise and begin the march to Adamant. And she’d waited far too long for Cassandra to waste any quiet moment she could get with her.

Alva bent over her, her lips brushing featherweight over the back of Cassandra’s shoulder. She applied more pressure, gently trailing her mouth over Cassandra’s back, down her spine. The soft brush of her fingertips followed the path of her mouth.

“Mmm.” Cassandra slowly opened up one eye, all but purring. “You... are insatiable.”

Alva laughed quietly. “I could very easily say the same about you.”

“That is your fault. You are far too... touchable.”

Alva found herself laughing again, moving to lie next to her Seeker, facing her. Cassandra was smiling at her, a soft look in her eyes. She drew her touch so very gently over Cassandra’s face. “I love you,” she whispered.

Cassandra closed her eyes and Alva watched her throat work. “And I you, Alvaerle.” Her eyes opened again, and she turned onto her side, scooting closer until their noses nearly touched. “May I court you my lady?”

Alva felt a lump forming in her throat again at the request. In answer she leaned forward, pressing her lips against Cassandra’s. Just the feel of the Seeker’s mouth against her own and immediately she wanted, craved more. Her lips trailed a soft, warm path over Cassandra’s throat, pushing the Seeker onto her back. She found a sensitive spot, just behind Cassandra’s ear, and found running the tip of her tongue across it made Cassandra wet. When she sucked, the Seeker moaned, and thrust her fingers into her lovers hair.

“Cassandra?” Alva whispered, lifting her head so she could look down at the Seeker.

“Hmm?” Cassandra’s eyes fluttered open, and even her attention to the question didn’t stop her from trailing her foot over the back of Alva’s leg, her hips lifting to press against her lovers.

Alva’s breath caught and it took another moment before she found her voice, “What made you change your mind?” After the question was asked, she shifted, pressing her sex more firmly against Cassandra’s and watched Cassandra’s cheeks began to turn red, even as her lover’s gaze darkened with her mounting desire and the elf couldn’t help but grin at the expression.

“I...” Cassandra licked her lips, her hands moving to Alva’s hips. “I... heard you.”

Understanding did not immediately dawn. Alva tipped her head curiously, even as she rolled her hips in a slow, sensuous movement, creating a friction that both women felt against their clits.

Cassandra moaned, her eyes snapping shut. It made Alva heady with desire when she felt Cassandra’s fingers tightening on her hip.

“Seeker?” Alva queried again when her lover remained silent.

Cassandra snapped open her eyes, an almost scowl on her face. "You wish to speak of this now?"

Alva laughed delightedly, rolling her hips again, but she didn't stop this time, continuing the motion over and over again. "Yes," she said her tone breathless. "I want to know. Tell me."

She watched as her lover's scowl quickly turned into an expression of pleasure. "I will... mmm... I will confess these things... if you promise not to stop," Cassandra said.

"I promise I won't stop." The motion of her hips did however, because Alva began to slid down her lovers her body, the soft drag of her open mouth marking a path over the muscles in Cassandra's stomach.

Cassandra breathed out roughly, her hooded gaze watching the elf. Alva paused, just to peek up at Cassandra expectantly and Cassandra made a gruff noise of defeat. "I came to your chambers, before you left with The Iron Bull and I... I heard you."

Alva paused for just a moment and a small wave of guilt crashed into her. She pressed her mouth lovingly against Cassandra's skin, dragging her tongue down the V of her hip, her mouth inching closer to her lover's sex. "I'm sorry," she whispered. "That you heard that."

Cassandra shook her head, reaching down to gently thread her fingers through Alva's hair. "Do not be sorry. The fault is mine. But, now that I have you—"

"You do. I'm yours Cassandra and no one else." Alva lifted her eyes briefly to Cassandra's and then she turned her head and pressed her lips against her lover.

Cassandra gasped above her, unable to stop the way her hips shifted towards the elf's mouth.

The subtle little motion turned Alva on to no end. She dragged her tongue through her lovers folds, parting her intimately, the motion unstopping until her tongue was against Cassandra's clit, slow soft teasing licks before Alva pressed her lips harder against her lover and began sucking.

Cassandra cried out, a loud wanton sound, her fingers tightening in her lovers hair. "I love you... please do not stop. I love you..."

Alva shivered instinctively at the sound of Cassandra's voice above her, the words rolled off her tongue in that incredibly sexy nevarran accent made Alva's chest tighten with emotion.

"I want to hear you say that again, Seeker," she whispered. "Maybe louder next time." A sensual smile pulled at the elf's mouth before those lips returned to the very important task of making her lover come.

## Chapter 7: Why is there an epilogue?

Unbeknown to the two lovers, outside the door to the Inquisitors room, Iron Bull, Dorian, Sera and Varric all sat around, ears perked for the sounds that were going on inside.

“That a girl,” Iron Bull rumbled in a quiet but highly amused tone, and then pointed at the door. “Hear that? Seeker loses it in less than five. Guaranteed.”

Sera giggled. “Wout? That quick again? No staying power that one. Least make her work for a li’ll.”

“I’m just surprised everything works down there,” Varric said. “Maybe give her a few more rounds, the pipes are out of practice.”

“I could use a bit of magic. Really heighten sensation,” Dorian looked like he was seriously considering it.

“What in the blazes are you all doing?” Cullen barked out, coming up the wooden staircase.

“Crap. Busted.” Iron Bull grumbled.

“We’re shamelessly listening to the Inquisitor and the Seeker have sex, Commander. Obviously,” Dorian said without missing a beat.

Cullen came up short at that answer, jerking his eyes to the door and then back at the group and the door again when he heard a sharp but muffled cry of pleasure and his cheeks turned beet red.

“Ha! See,” Iron Bull grinned at them. “Told you.”

“You know, if I made my characters come that fast even in a serial as bad as Swords and Shields, it still wouldn’t be believable,” Varric shook his head with that dry amusement on his face.

“This isn’t - you can’t just - ”

“What in the world are you all doing?” Leliana’s question interrupted Cullen’s stammering, Josephine bringing up the rear.

“Shouda sold tickets, I’m thinkin,” Sera giggled.

“We’ve got a bet going,” Dorian explained. “Well, I suppose we’ll need a new bet now.”

“5 to 1 odds they can squeeze in another round before Curly and crew have to interrupt them for important Inquisitor business,” Varric said.

“Bet.” Iron Bull said easily.

“I can’t believe you’re spying on the Inquisitor while she’s... she’s...” Josephine stammered.

“Sex Josephine. She’s having sex,” Leliana said with a faint smile pulling at her mouth. “With Cassandra no doubt. I’ll take your bet.”

“Are you all insane? This isn’t proper you can’t just-”

“Shhh. Don’t let them hear you, Curly. I think they’re going again,” Varric waved a hand at Cullen, ear perked towards the door.

“Well... I suppose since we’re all already here...” Josephine pushed through the crowd and over to the door.

And until it was time to pull the lovers apart and prepare for the battle at Adamant that’s where the group stayed. Rest assured if Cassandra ever found out - she was going to kill all of them.