

Tindariel studied the target closely, focusing her sea-grey eyes on the tiny white dot. Her powerful, six foot two frame froze momentarily before she raised her mighty dark-wooded longbow with dragon talons adorning the tips and began to draw the stout wooden arrow back. With a graceful, clean action, she loosed the arrow, sending the shadowy wood flying straight and true into the air and striking right next to the tiny white dot and going through the haystack. "Damn. I think I need to replace that haystack again," she grumbled, swearing incoherently.

She repeated the procedure many more times until her quiver ran out of arrows, taking care each time to reach her anchor and focus on the target. "I wonder how that Geekster boy is doing with Lhîndôme these days and whether those kids ever chose whether to embrace mortality or not," she muttered. Most of her arrows only barely touched the white dot, but one did strike the center. "Darn, thirty yards and I still can't quite do what I should be doing considering I'm Cylithera's daughter. Frontier Justice is easier from up-close!"

While Tindariel groaned at the relatively large spread on her arrows, a cold wind began to blow around her. She ignored the blowing wind, assuming it to be a normal autumn breeze that came from the north until a bright cylinder of silver light formed in front of her. "Kestrel?" she gasped. "You found a way back from death again?"

The cylinder of light gradually faded until a short, stocky dark-haired woman with a short pony-tail and camouflage appeared. In her hands was what Tindariel was sure was a metal torture device of some sort that only vaguely resembled a bow. On the woman's hip was a quiver filled with what looked like tiny, thin arrows with miniature white and orange feathers. "Oops, looks like that backfired," said the woman.

"Who the hell are you?" demanded Tindariel, gripping her bow nervously and nocking an arrow to the string.

"Captain Argon Greywolf, or Greywolf, if you prefer," said the woman who looked to be in her late twenties or thirties. "Where am I anyway?"

"The southern reaches of the Tindarn-Niniel. So, what brings a Terrian like you here?" grumbled Tindariel, relaxing a bit.

Greywolf looked around then groaned. "Crap. I really screwed that up. Let me guess then. You're none other than Tindariel Il-Kanan."

"How'd you know that?" asked Tindariel, glaring hard at the odd woman. "And what in tarnation is that torture thing?"

Smiling, she replied, "This goofy looking thing is my compound bow, a Bowtech Equalizer. Fastest bow for someone my size. And as for how I know you, well, a friend of mine told me your story once upon a time. Anya Cho, or rather, Kestrel. She was one of my colleagues in my field until she vanished."

Without warning, Tindariel cried out, "Kestrel! Oh, I miss the little one! That witch Iliiryana murdered her in cold blood, like she did to Killer Parakeet!"

"So that's what happened to the poor thing," said Greywolf somberly. She removed her camouflage cap and lowered her head for a moment, as did Tindariel. "But in any event, I was supposed to be investigating whether or not the Veil and Palindor are having the same problems as we are."

Killer Parakeet woke up to find himself on a large, firm bed filled with pillows. Rusty, his faithful wolf-mutt companion, was curled up next to him and had taken all of the blankets for himself. "Russ, gimme some too! Even parakeets get cold!" squawked the six and a half foot tall, three hundred pound parrot, tugging some blanket away from the snoring dog as his turquoise feathers fluffed up to trap in some more warm air. Then he saw that the light sources

weren't candles but rather what looked like small orbs. Was he in some wizard's castle again? Or did Clawstaff decide to allow the students to use their wizard-lights in their rooms? Then he saw the strange-looking red lights with numbers on them. It read: 4:30 AM before the zero turned into a one. "Huh?" he mumbled to himself. Certain he had been drinking too much again, he went back to sleep and hoped he wouldn't have too much of a hangover.

*Iliiryana smirked evilly at him as she poised herself to plunge the ice-cold scimitar through him. Just as she was about to sacrifice him to Tindariel Dalithariel, the ogre-like twins charged into her with their hockey sticks and distracted her long enough to give the parrot a chance to break free. In the distance, the giant albino mole-wolverine was shattering, smashing, devouring everything in its path. "Yuck, the Unnamed Terror," squawked Killer. Rusty was biting into it before it shook the huge dog off and grabbed him with its long, sticky tongue. Without a second thought, Killer grabbed his axe and dented pot and charged at the Unnamed Terror. Chad and Chester would have to deal with Iliiryana on their own.*

*Tindariel, too, had charged at the Unnamed Terror and shouted, "Frontier justice!" at the top of her lungs before slashing madly at the monster that had captured Rusty. She and Killer both attacked the god of blind fury and hunger, intent on saving their canine friend. Not far away, little Kestrel was dueling with Cylithera Eaglestrike, the Champion of the Eternal Huntress, and by the looks of it, neither was making any progress and neither would surrender to the other. Suddenly, Tindariel and the students collapsed on the ground just as Iliiryana shouted out some spidery syllable. The Unnamed Terror moved towards Tindariel and in anticipation of its next meal, it pulled the struggling mutt into its mouth before dropping him in. Then the tongue extended out to grab the Eldharin woman.*

*Killer let out a hideous challenging shriek at the sight of his canine companion being eaten and of his best friend in danger. Without thinking, he lunged madly at the giant mole-wolverine, hacking away at the tongue as hard as he could. "You killed my buddy-o-pal Jeremiah and you ate my doggie! You're not gonna take my buddy-o-pal Tindariel either!" he squawked. Tindariel could do little more than curse and lay helpless under Iliiryana's spell.*

*The parrot felt the wet, acidic hot tongue wrap itself around him. Squawking in pain, he tried to bite and claw at the rubbery tongue, but it only created more acid that burned his feathers and skin. Iliiryana returned to where the mole-wolverine was, covered in human blood. Smirking at Killer, she said smugly, "Farewell, Uncle. I gave you the choice to help me by helping me to destroy my father, Baelnorn Clawstaff, but you chose death and so the Unnamed Terror will have you." With that, she threw a black-bladed knife into Killer's heart.*

*Blood poured everywhere and Killer's struggles stopped almost instantly before the Unnamed Terror swallowed him and let out a loud, noxious burp. One burp turned into several more and the creature began to writhe in intense pain before charging off this way and that. Without warning, it combusted into a bright silver flame and melted into black goo that vaporized into smoke. Tindariel cried out when Killer vanished into the creature and summoning what was left of her strength, she forced herself to get up and pick up her longbow. Nocking her last arrow to the string, she took aim at Iliiryana, who was busy gloating at the Unnamed Terror's demise. With a whispered prayer to Gwaeron, the patron god of brawlers, bears, and boars, she loosed the arrow and struck Iliiryana in the arm. "Frontier justice!" she screamed at the top of her lungs before charging in at the half-Dhaerow woman.*

*And then Killer realized that after he got swallowed, he was witnessing the Unnamed Terror's destruction and Tindariel's berserk fury at Iliiryana from high above. Rusty was next to him and began to whine at the sight of one of the young students leaping in front of Tindariel to protect her from Iliiryana's spell...*

*"Wait a minute, I'm supposed to be dead," thought Killer as he woke up groggily in response*

to the sunlight that filtered in through the blinds. "Unless that whole Godsfall war was just a bad dream," he added. Some things were just so confusing to the parrot, who was very smart for one whose brains were squished in such a thick skull.

He surveyed the room to see where he might've been. There were a handful of lamps with those strange orb-like things and the thing with the numbers was still on the night-stand next to the bed. He could see a closet filled with clothing and yet another closet where Rusty seemed to be bent over something. The second closet had a white chair-like thing that Rusty was drinking out of and two more basins, one that he recognized as a bath-tub and the other he was sure was some kind of basin to wash up in. Rusty's voice echoed in his mind. *Killer, there's a nice drinking fountain here. You can even refresh the water and it's got a good minty taste to it too. I haven't found the food yet but I'll bet if you opened that third door, it would lead us to food.*

Killer walked to where Rusty was drinking water and he leaned over to also drink. "Ooh, it even has a lid!" he squawked before pulling the little handle. The water in the basin poured out and fresh water poured in with a swooshing noise. He took a beakful of water and commented, "Good stuff, Russ. We oughta get Clawstaff to build one of these for us too!" Just as parakeet and dog were enjoying the water, there was a knock on the door. The parakeet rushed to open the door to find a short middle-aged human woman with a dark complexion and short-cropped dark hair. She was wearing camouflage pants, a blue shirt with a stylized chess knight embroidered on the upper left chest pocket, and a blue cap with a matching stylized chess knight. Below the chess knight on both the hat and the shirt were the words: Chek-Mate Archery.

"Killer Parakeet?" she asked. "If you're feeling better, Captain Argon Greywolf wants to see you and Rusty."

"Where am I? And who the heck are you?" squawked Killer, moving back to the source of tasty water before taking another drink.

"Killer, that's not for drinking. That's a toilet. It's for what comes out from under your tail," started the woman, laughing at the sight of both parakeet and dog drinking from it. "As for your second question, I am Joanne de Salvo, or if you prefer, Soronthrel Cuthali3n. For your first question, you're at the Institute of Environmental Sciences in Ocala, Florida."

Rusty and Killer both lifted their heads out of the toilet. *Go figure. Humans and Eldharin and Dhaerow with their funny conventions. Seems like a waste of good water to me.* With that, Rusty sniffed at Soronthrel, while she petted the large canine. *She's a raptor type and kinda reminds me of Cylithera actually but not so scary. Just be careful. I don't quite trust her. I don't trust anyone who wastes perfectly good water.*

Soronthrel then said, "If you're hungry, there's food downstairs. In fact, we really could use you downstairs because of a roach infestation..." As soon as she mentioned roaches, Killer charged out of the room, knocking the woman aside and Rusty followed close behind, making sure the huge parrot didn't fall into a trap.

Captain Argon Greywolf and Tindariel sighed as yet another roach crawled out of the cupboard. "Where's Killer when we need him?" said both women at the same time. Nearby, Thomas Starr, a tall, muscular man in camouflage overalls with greying brown hair and old needle scars on his arm, let out a flurry of profanity as the canister of Raid spluttered the last of its contents. Several other people in the room were groaning as well at the huge population of cockroaches that threatened to take over the trailer. Next to Thomas was Moreth, an older ogre-like man with grey hair with a hint of brown in denim overalls, who was busily trying to step on as many roaches as possible before sweeping up their crushed bodies.

"Damn bugs. Greywolf, I thought you worked with pesticides before! Can't you and Brick-

Head come up with some chemicals to kill them?” started Moreth before trailing off into profanity. He and Thomas stopped after a while, realizing the futility of squishing more of the annoying bugs. ”Or maybe you shouldn’t have let Clone-Arranger try to breed that new batch of bugs in the lab!”

Before anyone could react, the door flew open to reveal a six and a half foot tall turquoise-feathered parakeet with a dented pot for a hat, dingy yellow feathers on his face, beady black eyes, and a large paunch that hinted that he almost never turned down a good meal. Killer Parakeet spotted a large roach with his beady eyes and charged straight at it before chewing on the floorboards to get not only the roach but its friends and family that hid underneath. ”Roaches!” he squawked eagerly, paying no heed to the damage he was causing in his search for the tasty bugs.

”You said he was dead!” mumbled Moreth to Greywolf.

Eagerly, Tindariel ran over to Killer and hugged the massive parakeet. ”Killer! By Gwaeron! You found your way back!”

Pausing in his excited feeding and destruction rampage, the mutant bird hugged Tindariel. A large piece of wood was still in his beak when he wrapped his dusty wings around her. ”Tindariel!” he shrieked, scattering bits of wood everywhere.

While the giant parrot and the Eldharin woman were hugging each other, Greywolf and Soronthrel merely looked on. ”Well, what next?” asked Greywolf, pondering at the turn of events. She shrugged and looked around.

Thomas was the first to answer. ”Now that we’ve got the roach exterminator cleaning out the bugs, shouldn’t we be doing something about that forgetfulness plague?”

Soronthrel laughed. ”We know that much, but what do we do with these two idiots?” She pointed at Killer, who was now hopping about in search of yet more roaches, and at Tindariel, who was downing most of the coffee from the coffee-pot.

An unusually large roach crawled close to where Tindariel had set down her black-yew longbow. Still hungry, Killer hopped over to the large roach and squawked, ”You’re going down, buddy!” The roach crawled up the bow and without thinking, Killer gnawed at the bow, taking both the weapon and the tasty insect. ”Ooh, yummy wood too,” he added, continuing to chew on Tindariel’s bow while she continued to guzzle down the coffee and a nearby bottle of Mountain Dew.

Moreth and Thomas looked at Soronthrel and Greywolf, then at the destructive duo. ”These fuckin’ losers are the ones who are helping us against the plague?” asked Moreth in disbelief.

”There’s the old gang from Forest Archers,” began Greywolf.

Suddenly, Tindariel bellowed in fury. ”Killer! You damned idiot!” She began to pummel the huge parrot with her fists. Killer, still chewing on the last pieces of her bow, merely looked up in confusion, his beady black eyes bouncing up and down. ”That was my baby, my masterpiece before I made Lhîndóme!”

”Oops,” squawked the parrot after spitting out the last pieces of the splintered wood. Furious at the giant bird, Tindariel stomped out of the room, cursing profusely. ”But it was yummy,” said Killer, sadly before running out the door to find Tindariel.

”Shit. We just fuckin’ fixed that fuckin’ floor,” swore Moreth, staring at the damage Killer just caused. Then the door that Tindariel slammed fell off the hinges, as did two more doors in the distance. ”And we just fuckin’ replaced those fuckin’ doors.”

Soronthrel and Greywolf groaned, then laughed at the sight of the damaged trailer and the sounds of Killer and Tindariel wreaking havoc. ”Holy, holy, holy crap,” said Soronthrel in an exaggerated Mexican accent after laughing. ”Remind me to not leave my recurve in plain view of Killer Parakeet.” Just then, Rusty, the large wolf-shepherd mutt, charged into the room,

knocking over everything that Killer and Tindariel hadn't just knocked down. With a loud bark and excited tail-wagging, the dog then ran back out, sniffing the air and ground before pursuing the two warriors. Two lamps fell from their stands, leaving shards of ceramics everywhere. "Holy, holy, holy crap. There goes those ceramic lamps I made!"

Killer and Rusty looked about in the vast garden of vegetables for any signs of Tindariel. Even for one as solidly built as Tindariel, Eldharin were adept at leaving hard to detect footprints, and her Sidhe heritage enhanced her skills of disappearance to a point where not even Rusty could detect anything. A scarecrow in a tattered set of overalls and orange and blue University of Florida t-shirt grinned nearby. "Hey, have you seen Tindariel anywhere? Tall Eldharin woman, black hair, kinda tanned complexion, sea-grey eyes, really buff and muscular..." started Killer before Rusty tugged at him and started barking.

*Killer, you idiot, it's just a scarecrow. Although the pumpkin does look tasty.*

At that moment, Killer's stomach began to growl loudly. That pumpkin certainly did look appetizing. "Ya know, you're right Russ. Plus I figure Tindariel needs some time to cool off so she won't Frontier Justice us."

*You. I didn't gnaw on her bow like some bird-brain! You're right though, I think Tindariel needs her time alone so she won't be fuming so bad. You get the pumpkin and then we'll split it. If only we had one of those toilets to drink from! Can't believe they waste perfectly good water like that!*

Killer hopped up and down until he finally was able to reach the bright orange pumpkin with a grin on its face. "Ooh, smells good too. It's a fresh one they just cut up! Hey, maybe we could find one of those rooms where they won't find us and then we can have a feast!" With that, he motioned for Rusty to follow him to a nearby trailer.

Not far from the parrot and the dog, Firianna Celethorn watched from her perch. Even Rusty, the insanely intelligent dog (well, at least compared to Killer and his other companions), failed to notice the red-tailed hawk nearby. She leaped off her perch on the oak tree and followed the duo to the trailer, wondering what could bring the dead back. As she pondered over the two of them and their antics, a voice rang in her mind. "Firianna, I've got something for them, something that'll make sure they can't interfere. I slew the bird once, I can slay him again if need be, but I have something far more interesting."

"Iliiryana? What harm could these two buffoons cause? Surely, he could be used to our advantage by keeping the Knights-Errant in confusion with his stupidity while the plague continues to take effect until we muster our forces in Dûnhèasa!"

"Wait until you see what I have in store for those two. I am under oath to not do anything to Tindariel, but with what'll happen with Killer and Rusty, I won't have to do anything to her. With or without Cylithera's help, Dûnhèasa will rise again! Follow those two and make sure they do eat their fill in that trailer."

The door on the pinkish brown trailer opened, as if to invite the dog and the parrot in. Savory smells trailed out, including that of bacon, roasted roaches, fried potatoes, and pepperoni pizza. "Ooh, yummy!" squawked Killer, charging in on clawed feet as fast as he could to the table. "Last one there has to listen to Solothain's singing!"

Without even bothering to question the source of the food, both parrot and dog began to gobble up the ample food on the table. Not only was there plenty of all the foods they had smelled, there was also large tankards of dark beer, an open bathroom with an inviting-looking toilet, and a huge box that both Killer and Rusty recognized as food-boxes. *This is good! If I weren't so hungry, I'd be a bit more leery, but heck, I'm sure that Soronthrel girl can cover our butts. She knows about us and this world, plus that Captain Greywolf seemed kinda cool the one*

*moment I saw her. I didn't like those two big fat guys.*

"Look at those pigs," commented Firianna. "Can't believe that the dog is a descendant of Huan of Enlade."

"Or that the bird was once human and brother to the necromancer who sired me," grumbled Iliiryana.

Rusty finished his plate of bacon before trying to slide some slices off Killer's plate. Fortunately for the dog, Killer was too focused on eating fried roaches and drinking dark beer. Slowly, the dog's paw pulled a few large, juicy hunks of bacon off Killer's plate and he slurped up the pieces before Killer noticed. If there was anything that was in short supply to Rusty, it was bacon. He thanked whoever provided the feast for providing so many roaches so Killer wouldn't notice a few missing pieces of bacon.

After several minutes, Killer began to burp loudly. "Whew, that was good! Perfectly fried roaches with the perfect crunch to them! And that was some good beer! Dunno 'bout you Russ, but I gotta lift my tail somewhere."

*I'm going to wash down the meal with some water. Ya know, I don't drink beer like you do. Water might even do you good!* Rusty ran to the toilet and flushed it before drinking eagerly from the white, porcelain bowl. For some reason, he felt really sluggish and lazy. Turning around to see how Killer was faring, he saw the parrot staggering about, probably from having enjoyed one too many pitchers of beer. Then Killer wandered out of sight, unable to walk in a straight line.

"Hey! Lookie here, we got dessert here too!" called out Killer eagerly. He opened a large white refrigerator to reveal several pies, cakes, dog biscuits, several bottles of beer and whiskey, and yet more roaches. With that, he tore into the refrigerator, heedless of the fact that his stomach was full. Rusty looked up from the toilet, flushed it, then ran over to the refrigerator and grabbed the fish-shaped dog biscuits and one of the pumpkin pies.

While Killer and Rusty raided the refrigerator, Firianna and Iliiryana flew into the trailer, un-noticed by the duo. They continued to eat voraciously and both of their guts began to expand. "How much longer?" whispered Firianna.

"Any moment," replied Iliiryana in raven form, smirking.

Rusty started belching and then Killer squawked, "Ooh, lemme see if I can do better!" He let out a loud, noxious burp and started to eat another chocolate-coated roach and washed it down with some more beer. Several more slices of pumpkin pie and candied insects later, the room seemed to spin around Killer. "Hmm, maybe I shouldn't have finished that twelve-pack!" The mutt, too, staggered about, confused and dizzy.

*Maybe we ate too much, too fast. Or there's something funny in the food.*

"Naw, it's the beer. Well, the pumpkin pie had rum in it," said Killer, trying to stop the world from spinning by hugging a nearby lamp before stumbling over to Rusty. Then darkness swirled around both of them. "I think I'm gonna have a headache soon!"

*I don't feel so good. Was there any grass in here?*

"I think I need to make a deposit somewhere," whined Killer, clutching his distended stomach. "How could you make a withdrawal with that sagging gut of yours?"

*I was going to make a deposit too.*

Soronthrel turned her computer on in hopes of getting Tindariel to stop sulking. "Hey, you might like this," she started. With that, a smooth, deep male voice began to sing along to a semi-menacing instrumental background.

Lo que hacemos cuándo nadie ve sabe a libertad

Entre el aire, el suelo, tu y yo hay complicidad  
Así no tienes que pedir perón  
En esto nada importa la razón.

Poco a poco dejas de pensar  
Te vas quedando sólo con tu lado animal

Se confunde la locura con primordial pasión  
Ese instinto que perdura sin evolución  
Así podrías saber todo de mi  
Y hasta dónde llegaría yo por ti

Poco a poco dejas de pensar  
Te vas quedando sólo con tu lado animal

"Kestrel music, except she listened to stuff in understandable languages, not gibberish," grumbled Tindariel, a tear in her eye at the thought of her old roommate. "I'm gonna frontier justice that parrot's ass for eating my bow!"

The captain then walked into the large office. "We oughta teach you some Spanish at some point, but I guess first things first. I didn't realize Killer was going to do that, but anyway, I'll take you into town to get you a Killer-proof bow."

A stream of growling words escaped from Tindariel's mouth. "Damn idiot, couldn't he limit himself to those bugs?"

"You don't mean to get Tindariel an Olympic recurve or a compound, do you? Or is there engineered wood that's unappetizing to overgrown parakeets?" gasped Soronthrel at the mention of a Killer-proof bow.

"We'll see what they've got. Probably a compound, she did take a liking to that Equalizer," said Greywolf. "Or I get Sunshine to enchant one of those Howard Hill-style longbows or one of my Chek-Mates to be Killer repellent."

Tindariel's sea-grey eyes lit up at the mention of the Equalizer. "That damned idiot wouldn't gnaw on that."

"I'll take you over to Jerry's after I meet up with Christie and Oleg from the UF restoration team," said Greywolf. "I should be back in about an hour. Tindariel, if you want, you can explore or have Soronthrel here give you a tour... or a test-shoot." With that, Greywolf disappeared out the door.

Soronthrel nodded and motioned for Tindariel to come over to a large closet. "I've got a few bows you could try out, although we're a bit short on arrows long enough for you." She pulled out a golden-brown curvy three-piece bow with a yellow and maroon string. "Four Winds, can't get them anymore, custom-made for the Captain. Or maybe you might like this little Chek-Mate, although you're pretty tall and might get some finger pinch, also very hard to get these days." She pulled out a golden-brown curved one-piece bow with a slender set-back handle similar to a horse-bow and had a blue and orange string on it.

She grabbed the horse-bow first. "This is more like my little baby that Killer ate." She drew back cautiously, sensing that both Greywolf and Soronthrel were just as protective of their archery equipment as she was. "What about one of those Killer-proof bows? Any of those lumbering boys shoot them? Greywolf told me I'm too big to use hers and it wouldn't draw to where I need it." She smiled approvingly at the horse-bow, then did the same with the longbow, only to let out an uncomfortable expression part-way through the draw. Without

much hesitation, Tindariel then began to go through the closet, examining each bow and admiring it before testing the draw carefully.

"I can get Thomas' bow, not sure where Moreth keeps his, but their bows might be a bit long in draw for you, although the poundages should be good. Thomas draws around sixty five, Moreth draws about seventy five," replied Soronthrel. "They drew more when they were young punks."

While Soronthrel told Tindariel stories of each of the individual bows as she handled them, Greywolf slumped back into the room, exhausted. "Oleg and Christie need help, we're already spread thin, the forgetfulness plague also struck Gainesville, technology is failing and scientists are forgetting what they've learned all these years."

"Holy, holy, holy crap! Iliiryana's getting damn aggressive," grumbled Soronthrel. "I'll go help them out."

"Good luck, and be careful!" called out Greywolf, who then motioned to Tindariel to follow her. "I'll come and help you out as soon as Tindariel armed, unless she found something in here she liked."

Killer Parakeet woke up with what must've been the worst headache on record, even worse than the last headache he had, which he was sure was already a record-breaker. Stretching out, he looked around to see where he had fallen asleep. His stomach certainly hurt too and when he saw all of the emptied plates nearby, he thought, "Darn, I ate too much. But those roaches were good!" Then he felt a vaguely familiar sensation, an urgent sensation of fullness, and he tried to sit up. As he sat up, something felt missing on him and he rubbed his eyes, convinced it wasn't real. "Hands!? No beak? No feathers?" roared Killer, no longer squawking or shrieking, but rather rumbling.

For a moment, the large man paced back and forth in the messy trailer. "Russ? Where are you?" he called out anxiously. He paused at a mirror, staring at himself from the messy mop of dark brown hair to the somewhat bushy grey-streaked dark brown beard to his powerfully muscular, hairy arms and hands, and to his suddenly small, claw-less human feet. "Very funny," he thought, noting that he was wearing a pair of turquoise shorts and a turquoise shirt with dirty white and yellow highlights. At least he wasn't naked.

Rusty yapped incessantly with a high-pitched, shrill bark, running around in circles and pawing at the full-length mirror. *Killer! Killer! Killer! Look at me!* Killer couldn't help but laugh at the sight of the tiny, fluffy black and red-tan fox-like dog with his tail over his back. He wagged his tail faster than a metronome before jumping up and pawing at Killer's knees with his delicate little paws.

"Aww, you're one of those little fluffy fox-dogs Kestrel was obsessed with!" laughed Killer, lifting the now miniature dog. Then something warm and wet covered the front of his shirt. "And your spout still works!"

*Not funny. I'm incontinent now! Maybe we should investigate what's going on outside. I don't have a good feeling about this.*

There was a soft rustling at the door followed by a quiet click. The door opened up to reveal Soronthrel, who instantly nocked a red-fletched arrow to her bow, drew back, and took aim at Killer. "Soronthrel! It's me and Rusty!" shouted Killer. "We had dinner last night, fell asleep and now we woke up in funny bodies!"

Not sure whether to laugh, groan, or curse, Soronthrel merely exclaimed, "Holy, holy, holy crap! At least you two didn't turn into pigs or we would've made bacon out of you guys!" Then her piercing dark eyes scanned the room. "And the two of you ate all of the components for our disguise and transformation spells! Now I know why Tindariel's so pissed at you!"

All Killer could say was "Oops." His tanned face grew beet-red after realizing that the scrumptious meal of roaches, potatoes, beer, bacon, and everything else the huge parakeet, er, man, loved was a fake. Rusty merely put his tail between his legs and lowered his head.

"Well, can't blame the two of you with those legendary appetites if Kestrel wasn't exaggerating. If anything, she underestimated your appetites, judging from the damage," said Soronthrel, evaluating the extent of the destruction. "And Killer, you might want to think of a new name in the time being. We have our aliases, but Killer Parakeet just goes too far. Even your old human name, Kealdhan, seems a bit too far-off."

Before Killer or Rusty could respond, a cold wind blew in the trailer and the lights began to flicker. A raven and a red-tailed hawk flew in, perching on the half-chewed chairs. "Holy crap!" growled Soronthrel, drawing her bow after quickly nocking an arrow to it again.

The raven and hawk eyed Killer, Rusty, and Soronthrel. "We meet again, Soronthrel Cuthalión, or should I say, Joanne de Salvo," said the raven as she grew in size and took on humanoid form. She was even shorter than Joanne, who stood about five foot four, but she was of a slender, yet powerful build. The woman had dark, dusky skin, long silver hair tied up in a tight bun, and piercing, red-glowing eyes. The room temperature went down by several degrees as she made her transformation from raven to woman. She was clad in leather and she had a pair of silver scimitars inscribed with runes. "Shame that you chose to decline to enter Dûnhèasa and remain mortal, or you'd be on the victorious side," she said.

"Iliiryana! You witch!" growled Killer. "If you weren't my niece, I'd... administer frontier justice!" The large man's rippling muscles shook and his tanned face turned scarlet at the sight of the half-Dhaerow woman. Rusty growled at her and his long, black whiskers quivered as he bared his tiny teeth at her.

She merely laughed at the sight of the man and dog. "Those shapes become you really well, Killer and Rusty. And Soronthrel, maybe you should take a break from meddling with my plans after that time you stopped me from entering Dûnhèasa." With a dismissive gesture, she hissed an incoherent syllable. Silver feathers grew all about Soronthrel and her features grew angular and feral.

The middle-aged woman gritted her teeth and focused as hard as she prevent the feathers from forming. The Night-Falcon woke up once more in her mind and she could feel fury building up inside of her. "Mierda santa!" cried Soronthrel, wondering at how Iliiryana was able to cast that transformation spell on her. Her shoes burst as razor-sharp talons emerged from her feet. At first, she was able to keep the feathers from growing, but soon her body was overwhelmed by silver feather sprouting from her skin and her shirt ripped in the back from a mighty pair of wings forming on her back. Killer and Rusty could only watch Soronthrel transform from the energetic and robust middle-aged woman into a large falcon.

"Once a falcon at heart, always a falcon, so let your form match that of your heart!" intoned Iliiryana. "Now go fly, fly away, and be who you were meant to be, one of the Sidhe, not a mortal bound to a lumbering ogre!" Unable to resist her command, Soronthrel keened loudly before flying out of the trailer.

"Where's my brown pants?" whined Killer, his dark eyes bulging out slightly in terror at Iliiryana's power. A puddle formed underneath Rusty and he tucked his fluffy tail between his hind legs. "What did she ever do to you?" he said, trying hard to not imitate the wolf-hound. "Besides slowing down your conquest, that is."

"Silence, fool!" hissed Iliiryana and suddenly Killer couldn't move his jaw anymore. She then smirked at the huge man and tiny pomeranian before focusing on them and chanting softly. Killer let out a loud yawn, as did Rusty, and while Iliiryana continued her incantation, both of them found their way to the couch. In little time, loud snoring filled the room from

man and canine.

Iliiriana walked over to the sleeping figures and pulled out a pair of deep blue gems from her pouch. Whispering in soft, spidery words, she placed one of the gems on Killer's forehead and the other on Rusty's forehead. The gems began to glow brightly and became filled with a softly gleaming light. Killer continued to snore heavily, shifting ever so slightly. Several heartbeats later, the gems stopped glowing, both now containing tiny black strands in the otherwise clear gems. "Enjoy your new lives, Larry McCoy and Pom-Pom." With that, she dissolved into insubstantial silver smoke.

For some reason, Larry McCoy felt like taking a trip over to the archery pro-shop down the road. He sat up and rubbed his eyes before getting up from the couch he had fallen asleep on. Pom-Pom, the black and tan pomeranian that slept on his lap, still snored blissfully until Larry lifted the tiny dog up. With a soft whine, Pom-Pom looked up and wagged his tail. "Well, Pom-Pom, I'm fixin' to get me a longbow. Dunno why, but been wantin' to try one," said the burly man.

The cobwebs in his mind slowed down his movements as he trimmed his bushy brown beard.