

“Gonna go get some chickpedes.” He stated flatly, not looking at his little companion. Hoping she would understand.

Voe frowned, not understanding. “Oh, okay. They’re not too bad. I guess.”

Sig turned over the knife in his hands. It needed to be oiled. Badly. “Might take awhile. Been tailing a mudqueen the last few days. Dropped her eggs in the last week, so they should hatch soon. Thirteen of ‘em. A large clutch.”

Voe’s unnerving girl-eyes were still on him. Narrowed. “Are you asking me to come with you?”

“If you can.” He flicked the knife's tip towards her bandaged forearm and warned, “Don’t if you’re not up for it. If that arm of yours goes bad, I’ll cut it off.”

“Oh.” She went pale. Hesitated. Flexed her hand and looked at her elbow. Prodded the muscle. Twisted and repeated the process. “I think...it’ll be all right.”

“You sure?”

“If I’m careful and keep it dressed properly, yes.”

Sig eyed her for a long moment. “You’re just really antsy, aren’t you?”

“So what if I am? I am so sick of this site. We’ve been here for weeks and I’m learning nothing new except how not to use one of my arms. No, Sig, I’m perfectly all right. Quite literally.” Waspish. Pouty, put-out girlishness.

He sheathed his knife. “Understandable, I guess. Been awhile since we’d...left.”

“...I am going to kill you.”

“Nah, you’re not.”

A frown that crumpled into a grin. Happy girl-eyes, despite herself. “So, are we going now? What should I bring? How long will it be for? How should I—“

“We’ll go now; it’s light enough. Bring food, poultices, bandages, cords. Your knife. Wear the guards I made you this time, not that stupid resin shit you bought. Four days. Maybe five.”

“Oh, this will be a perfect time to study tracks, and then I’ll work on throws and maybe on traps too. Mudpedes eat bullfrogs, and fish...but it’s warm blood they like best; they always go for it. We’ll need small prey to distract them, I think. Especially with the way you fight them Sig — provoking them until they gang up on you.” She raised a stern finger at him, as if she knew what she was talking about. "You'll get yourself killed that way. You should divide and conquer; they’re smarter than you think. They play, you know. With rocks. I’ve seen them do it. Oh, wait, let me get a pack; maybe this one...” she rattled away as she navigated the mess that was the campsite; gathered various necessities together.

Sig watched her hop about and fuss, highly amused. Chatty creature.

Well, at least now he knew that she hated chickpede meat.

It made no difference to him; he’d kill and spit-roast the queen instead. It would be easy. He’d done it before, as a Meathunter. Dozens of times. Even fought and killed gangs of them without injury.

But Voe didn’t need to know that. It was even kind of cute that she didn't, for it gifted him the risk of being impressive.