



1/10/08 J. P. J.

A Warrior's Pride

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Fallen Warrior

Ari sat on the raised platform listening to the beautiful singing of one of the younger of the clan's warriors. The boy's sweet voice wrapped the listeners in the past glories of their clan as everyone hung on his words. By this time tomorrow Ari knew that the boy along with him

and most of his clan would be wiped out by the invading Horse Lords and their leader Nigteagle. Yet the spell of the ancient triumph swept his people along, making them for the moment invincible in their hearts, if not their bodies. Ari closed his ice blue eyes, trying to lose himself as well, but despite the rousing words it couldn't banish the thoughts of his clan's death.

It had only been a brief eighty years since their clan had settled in the Valley of Mist.

Raised with a sword in their fists from the day they were born, each member of the dwindling clan of the Iolair were born to fight, yet their constant warlike ways had brought them to the brink of extinction despite their formidable skills. It was Ari's great-grand uncle that had settled the clan in the fertile valley and

brought peace, hoping to rebuild their numbers to one day battle again. That dream wasn't to be, at least not now.

The Horse Lords had finally united under the banner of one man. A powerful warrior of barbaric ruthlessness and cunning that had swept the world under the hoof of their horses. Intent on battle and plunder, they swept through the lands robbing, raping, and burning their enemies, leaving a wake of destruction behind. Thousands rode under the banner of Nigteagle, who it was said found exquisite pleasure only in the heat of battle.

Ari had evacuated the protesting women with children under ten, and a small number of young warriors in the forest beyond the valley where Nigteagle would not enter. It was the

one place the tribe of Horse Lords feared, the depth of forest so different and foreign than the open freedom of the vast expanse of plains of their homeland. The women had demanded their right to fight with the clan and die a warrior's death, but Ari was adamant that the Iolair survive. He wouldn't be the leader that had to oversee the death of his ancient clan, for him the recognition of being the youngest leader of his people was enough for him.

The song came to an end as Ari opened his eyes and applauded with the rest of his people. The musicians struck up a rousing beat as many began to dance. The smiling laughter a strange counterpart to the somber thought that swirled in his mind. His people were happy, the day of battle had returned despite the insurmountable odds against them; they would

die as warriors. Peace didn't suit the Iolair, and Ari knew that this battle was something they wanted. His clan always looked forward to the coming of foolish people that had tried to raid their clan.

Every woman, man, child, and oldster wanted to fight and die in glory, it been hard to convince the few that had to flee to the forest. They had protested vigorously that how could they even claim to be Iolair when they had survived in such a way, cowardly fleeing from battle and glorious death? It had been a hard won victory that, for Ari, was rather hollow and empty, for there was some truth in their words.

The Iolair never ran from battle; it was the one reason that Nigteagle had set his sights on his people, who were not as rich as those around them. For the prestige of destroying the

legend of the invincible Iolair, Nighteagle would drive his thousands into the Valley of the Mist to battle the slim five hundred people left of his clan.

“Ari, would you dance?” asked Strum, his sword instructor and former lover.

Ari stared at Strum with a frown, looking at the honey blond haired man with a powerful square face and flashing emerald eyes. He could see the man was trying to make peace between them, despite the fact Ari had flat out refused his company the past month. For an instant Ari considered it, for he had not found anyone to fill his bed, and yet he knew that he would rather be alone than feel the sting of disappointment of their pairing.

Ari knew that no matter how hard his

old teacher and lover tried, there was no way he could fulfill his true desire. Strum had tried and for years it had been enough, but now he had outgrown Strum and he could deny it no longer. He watched Strum lift a long strand of his pale white hair in his calloused hand, as he leaned over to whisper in Ari's ear.

“I have a new set of ropes for you. You have been very disobedient to resist me for so long, I intend to teach you the price for such audacity before we die,” Strum purred in his ear.

A year ago such threats would have made Ari tremble in desire, but now he felt nothing but pity for the man gazing down at him. When he was young, before he had become the chief of the Iolair, Strum had been a powerful, strong man that outweighed Ari by more than a little. He was the best and strongest of all the

clan warriors except for the chief. Strum had seemed invincible and commanding, just the type of person that drew Ari. It hadn't taken long for his teacher to notice the starry-eyed gaze of his pupil, who would often times deliberately disobey him. It was apparent from the beginning that Ari was looking not only for attention but something more carnal in his acts of defiance. The first time Strum had strapped him for deliberately dropping his sword, the man knew what Ari's true intentions were by his growing erection at Strum's discipline.

That day had led to one of the most intensely erotic days of Ari's life, even now the thoughts of that day could make him throb in desire. A young, virginal youth being taken by his strong teacher. The following years had led to a relationship between the two that was

frowned on but overlooked because of both of their extreme talents as warriors. Days were spent in the training yard, where Strum pounded him with a sword until Ari's skills outshone everyone in a clan full of warriors. Nights were spent bound and tied as his instructor tortured his body, bringing passions and desire spiked with pain flowing through him.

The last two years had brought many changes in both of their lives; foremost among them was Ari's elevation to clan chief of the Iolair. When the old chief had died, Ari had been elected unanimously for his skills with a sword and ferocity in battle that had earned him the name White Demon, to the foreigners who were foolish enough to attack their clan in hopes of seizing their treasure or make a name for themselves.

As was proper, he found a woman to bear him a child, and had taken over the hundreds of details of running their small clan. His mornings were spent sparring warriors who wished to test their skills against the clan chief, his afternoons spent buried in the minutia of clan life, and his evenings divided between Gislia and Strum. He had to admit that Strum had graciously stepped aside to Gislia, but Ari suspected it was only because he knew that there was nothing between them except the agreement to sire and raise a child together. Gislia only paired with him until their son had been conceived, then she as well chose another lover.

Leadership, the birth of his son, and sparring everyday with hotheaded young warriors had made Ari even more aware of his

own strengths as a man, and when compared to his lover he found Strum lacking. He was a good man and when needed a considerate lover who knew what Ari wanted and needed, but he wasn't strong enough. The game between them was just a game, the reality was heartbreakingly simple for Ari. Strum could never truly dominate Ari as he wished because Strum lacked the skills to do it. Ari could easily overpower his old lover now, not just on a physical level but an intellectual as well. Knowing that he submitted not because of the man's strength of will but because of Ari's need to have someone, anyone command him left Ari hollow inside.

It had been a shock to Strum when one night Ari had snapped the bounds of rope that Strum had tied tightly and got up. Strum had come at him meaning to push him to the ground

and overpower him, only to find Ari astride his chest looking down at him in sadness. Ari had in an empty voice told Strum that they were over. In the month that had followed Strum had tried repeatedly to get him back into his log home, yet Ari had refused.

Many of the clan had looked at the breakup between the pair as a good opportunity to become Ari's new lover. Not only was he the clan leader, but he knew that many woman and even men looked at him with open desire. He had the classic features of his clan, with broad shoulders, lean hips, and taut muscles on his chest and arms. Long, well muscled legs met with a round curve of ass which Strum had often commented was his best feature. His long, white blond hair hung down to his thighs, a testament to his prowess as a warrior. Only in defeat did

an Iolair cut their hair, and Ari had never once needed to. He had often heard in whispers that his ice blue eyes were the thing that drew his potential suitors the most, with their powerful gaze that made one forget their purpose, except to please him.

Even now Ari could feel the eyes of his clan on him, wondering what his answer to Strum would be. He knew that most of them expected Ari to take Strum to his home, since he had refused all offers from the others of the clan. Even Strum had expected it, despite Ari's consistent refusal of him. None of them knew that Ari had refused all offers simply because he knew that no one in the clan was able to equal him, let alone surpass him.

“No, Strum,” Ari said quietly, looking up at the man sadly.

“We will die tomorrow, will you not give me this one thing,” Strum pleaded softly.

“No, the only person that will enter my bed again is one that can surpass me. That is the only person I can love,” Ari replied as he saw Strum’s eyes widen.

“Then you would always be alone Ari. No one can surpass the White Demon,” Strum answered letting Ari’s hair fall.

Ari watched the man walk away, feeling sadness overwhelm him despite the high spirit of the people around him. Maybe Strum was right, but Ari would never get a chance to find out, for tomorrow he would die under a horde of enemies. The only thing he hoped was that his son would be able, unlike his father, to find the

one destined for him.

“There, it is finished,” Strum said with satisfaction as he looked over Ari’s naked body.

“Thank you Strum,” Ari said, looking down at the his painted body with intricate blue signs of protection on his white skin.

“Glad to do it, at least I got to touch your naked ass one more time before the end,” Strum leered.

“Strum,” Ari sighed.

“Just joking, still I think you should have let me put a blue hand print on it all things considering.”

“How about I put one on you?” Ari growled.

Strum turned around, presenting Ari with his naked ass with a grin. Ari couldn't help but smile as the man looked around and stood up.

“Glad to see you smile Ari.”

“Thanks Strum, I just hope that Gislia and the others remain safe. I don't want to be remembered as the last leader of the Iolair,” Ari said, grabbing his swords.

“There are worse things to be remembered for. Besides, you can't fool me, I know you're excited. Your blood's boiling is it?” Strum answered, picking up his own sword.

“There are only two ways for me to truly feel alive,” Ari answered.

“I couldn’t make you feel alive anymore, could I? Does that mean that you used to think I was better than you?” Strum asked as they walked.

“At everything,” Ari said quietly. “I did love you.”

“Thank you for that at least. Well it’s time.”

“Yes,” Ari said simply, looking down the hill to the four thousand horse lords on the doorstep of Iolair’s home.

Ari watched the first wave of horse men approach his line of naked warriors, feeling

his whole body tingle with excited energy. Looking down at his line of men and women he felt the tension exploding from them as they waited impatiently for the enemy to approach. With a grin he looked over at Strum and winked before giving a loud bellow that echoed throughout the valley and running at the charging horses as he felt his men follow, cheering.

Ari lost track of the time as both men and horses fell under his blade. It wasn't long before the intricate designs Strum had so carefully applied on his naked body were covered in the blood of the enemy. The noise of steel against steel, the screams of the men and horses fighting and dying, almost deafened him as he plunged further and further into the horde of horsemen, losing one of his swords but continuing on, creating a wake of destruction in

his path.

Suddenly in front of him he saw a man, dressed in the finest of chain mail and a helmet covering his face, dismount and come charging toward him. Men and horses moved out of the man's way as his sword met with Ari's, jarring him with its power. A circle seemed to open before them as they fought, as though the men around them knew not to interfere with what was taking place. Ari howled as he attacked furiously, only to be countered and pushed back. He could see the man's breath become labored as his own and their gory blades met again and again.

Ari could feel the heat of the man's body so close to his own as their blades ground against each other, the grating of steel singing in his ears as he pushed, finally winning the contest

of strength as the man fell back, his black eyes wide with shock. He recovered quickly, ripping off his helmet, his long raven black hair falling free as he charged Ari.

Ari felt shock run through him at the man leaping towards him, stunned for a split second at the absolute beauty of the warrior he faced. Black hair whirling around the man as he raised his sword, bearing down at Ari with a furious gleam in his dark eyes that sent a jolt of excitement through Ari. Shaking himself from the trance he raised his blade a half second too late, feeling the force of his opponent's swing rip the sword out of his hands.

Growling in absolute anger, Ari charged, diving under the slicing blade that had swung around as he grabbed the man's wrist, snapping

it as the sword dropped out of the man's hand, even as his opponent's free hand connected fully against his skull, turning the world black.

Nighteagle looked down at the naked man on the floor of his tent with open desire. The White Demon of the Iolair. He was shocking and surprising; he was nothing like the man Nighteagle expected. He never imagined he would be able to capture the man alive, he had no intention of it until he had seen the man cloaked only in blue paint and blood come screaming through his men, leaving a trail of dead behind him. He knew in an instant who the man was, just by the aura of death that flowed around the gorgeous man. Divinity in motion were the only words Nighteagle could use for the man who was known as the White Demon.

It had been sheer luck that he had been able to capture the man. He wasn't even sure how it had happened, but for a single moment it was as though the man had lost consciousness. In that single instant Nigteagle was able to disarm him, and even then, with no weapon, the man had almost had him. Looking down at his cracked wrist he smiled at the thoughts of their battle. He should have stuck a sword through him instead of knocking him out, yet something inside of him desired this man. It was suicide to try to keep him, for it was obvious that he was skilled beyond imagination with a sword, but Nigteagle didn't care.

Looking down at the luminous pearl white skin he was amazed by the unmarred surface. This man had been through many

battles to have earned his name, yet his perfect skin was unblemished except for, strangely enough, scars encircling his wrists as though he had been held captive. He had run into battle completely naked except for guards around those wrists, hiding the scars. Nigteagle wondered at the story behind them, knowing for certain that this man had never known defeat or captivity before. Only Nigteagle of the Horse Lords would be mad enough to even try holding this fierce beast against his will.

Nigteagle's eyes inevitably drifted down to the unawakened manhood that nestled in a soft bed of white curling hair. He admired the size and shape of the unconscious man, wondering briefly what he would look like full and hard with desire, something he had never considered before with his other partners. He

unconsciously licked his lips, feeling an overwhelming desire to do the unthinkable, suckle the man as a defeated warrior would.

“He is clean, husband,” GraySparrow said softly, looking at the floor.

“Yes, prepare him for me. Then leave us,” Nigteagle said, glancing fleetingly at the small pregnant woman with short cropped, mousy brown hair.

He watched as she pushed and heaved the dead weight of the unconscious man until he was on his belly. She parted the man’s ass, inserting a generous amount of oil in the as Nigteagle watched greedily. The light pink hole seemed so impossibly small and inviting as his wife slipped her small finger inside the man. He reigned in his desire for the movement, knowing

with certainty he wanted this man awake before he began his conquest of the White Demon's virgin ass.

“Nigteagle?” came the familiar voice of Starfall as a tall, lanky warrior entered his tent.

Graysparrow rose gracefully from the ground despite her bulging belly and moved towards the exit quietly. Nigteagle nodded politely to her as she left, glad for such an obedient wife. Looking over at the entering man he frowned fiercely, surprised to see Starfall, since he often avoided Nigteagle after a battle, making him search for him.

He noticed that the young warrior had recently bathed, and his shoulder length black hair was wet and slicked back away from his

finely crafted face. His slim, elegant body clothed in his best light brown leathers and an emerald stud in his right ear. He could tell that the young warrior had dressed himself up to impress Nigteagle.

“What is it?” Nigteagle growled.

“I thought you would like to know that we lost fifteen hundred men in this battle, but all of the Iolair are dead except for five captives and this man,” Starfall answered hesitantly.

“Did they surrender?” Nigteagle asked in surprise.

“No, they were knocked unconscious like this one.”

“Interesting, I didn’t expect our losses to

be so high, over half of their forces were women, children, and oldsters. They were worthy foes,” Nigteagle mused.

“There is a forest nearby. It will take a day to cut enough wood to burn our dead,” Starfall said softly.

“And the Iolair as well,” Nigteagle commanded.

Starfall looked surprised for a moment then nodded in approval.

“Is there anything else,” Nigteagle asked impatiently.

“I thought...”

Nigteagle’s eyes swung over to the

warrior, looking at the man intently as he paled and looked at the ground. He could see it in the Starfall's eyes even though he denied it, even though he protested.

“What is it Starfall, you still want to be my bitch?” Nigteagle said deeply, walking forward toward the warrior.

“No, I hate it, but I lost to you. I follow the old ways,” Starfall said defiantly.

“So you are only following the old ways? You don't like my cock up your ass?” Nigteagle asked, grabbing the man's chin, making him face him.

“How could I possible like it? I'm a strong warrior, you are the only one that could possibly defeat me and make me submit to you,”

Starfall said desperately.

“Then why did you challenge me? Did you honestly think you could win?”

“Yes, damn you. I thought I could be you, instead I ended up on my knees as you rutted with me. Again and again,” Starfall said, jerking back angrily.

“Good, then you are free of your obligation to me. I now have a new defeated warrior to rut with. If I tire of him I will challenge another,” Nigteagle said, dismissively turning his back on the man as he heard him leave.

Laughing softly he knew that the young man would be back eventually, despite his protests, but Nigteagle had no intention of using

Starfall again. The man wanted it too badly and his full submission to Nigteagle's demands cooled his desire for the young warrior. He could never respect a man who willingly offered his ass to him without protest. Although the boy's moans of pleasure had their appeal, his cries of defiance had excited Nigteagle more.

Looking back over at the naked man on the floor he felt himself harden just thinking of the night ahead. The man's naked ass and bound hands stirred something deep within him, a burning desire for conquest. He looked at the hair that had been crimson with blood, now almost white, spilling over the man's back and sighed with regret.

Kneeling down he gathered the hair in his hand and brought out a knife, hesitating. The soft, corn silk hair slid through his fingers,

tantalizing him. By his traditions, and he suspected the Iolair's, the White Demon must shore his hair. He had been defeated, but despite that Nigteagle hesitated to mar the beauty of the man. He let the hair fall for a moment before braiding the impossibly long hair that matched his own, except for the color. When he finished he took his knife and sliced through the braid. Tying off both ends he tucked the trophy away in one of his chests regretfully.

He heard a soft moan and turned to see his captive stir on the floor and smiled. He watched the man, with a grace he shouldn't have possessed, being bound and lying in an awkward position, rise to his knees and turn to face Nigteagle.

Fierce, ice blue eyes glared at him for a

moment before he saw the man's arms flex as he heard the impossible ripping of the binding ropes. Nigteagle stared in amazement as the man launched himself at him, the White Demon's hands encircling his throat in an instant.

Nigteagle dropped to the ground, planting a foot in the man's mid-section, pushing with all his strength and sending the man hurling over him. He rose only to see the totally naked man coming at him again, his expression that of man intent on death whether it be Nigteagle's or his own.

Grinning in pleasure Nigteagle planted himself as the man attacked. Before long they found themselves on the ground grappling each other, before Nigteagle got the slight advantage and flipped the warrior quickly, seating himself

on the middle of the man's back and pinning his arms. The man under him struggled fiercely until Nigteagle reached around behind him to hit the wiggling ass hard with his hand, almost losing his grip on the warrior's crossed arms.

Suddenly the strength in the man's arms decreased slightly as Nigteagle struck the man's ass again. The White Demon bucked under him, yet despite his fighting it seemed almost weaker.

“Let go of me you son of a bitch,” the man under him growled.

“I don't think so, you belong to me now.”

“Let me die, damn you. This is not life for a warrior.”

Nighteagle chuckled at the words, acknowledging their truth but unwilling to kill the man despite the fact that it was the right thing to do. He gripped the man's arms hard, pinning them, and reached around to land multiple hard blows on the now red ass of the man under him. He expected the man to renew his struggling and was surprised when he felt the man lift his hip a little.

Curious, he slid off the man's back and flipped him quickly, recapturing the man's wrists in his hands to look down in absolute shock. The man known as the White Demon, who was feared by all, was completely engorged. His organ, red and angry, stood up straight as ice blue eyes glared at him. Nighteagle almost lost himself inside his confining pants at the unexpected sight.

Without saying a word Nigteagle did something he had never done before expect with his wives, he leaned down and forced his mouth on the warrior under him. He felt resistance as the man bit his lip. Tasting the metallic taste of his blood he moved his mouth down to the man's pale pink nipple and licked it to hardness, flicking a tongue over the ridged surface before taking the erect little nub in his teeth, biting.

The White Demon struggled beneath him, his now leaking member leaving a white trail on Nigteagle's chest. He continued to play with the little nipples until he heard the man growl in pleasure. Nigteagle looked up to see anger and lust mixing in the man's face as he let go of one of the man's arms to quickly undo his confining pants and sink himself brutally into the small opening that had tantalized him not so long

ago.

Instead of the expected cries of anguish at his brutal invasion he heard the man growl in pleasure even as he felt the man's nails embed in the tender flesh of his face, drawing blood. Nigteagle hissed in pain, thrusting hard and deep in retaliation even as he felt long, powerful legs wrap around his, squeezing him painfully against the man's body.

Reaching down, he stroked the pulsing member, squeezing it hard occasionally as the man hissed at him. Looking down into the deep pools of lust that made up the man's eyes he leaned down and pressed his mouth to the red lips, and the man began to suck on his lower, injured lip, drawing out a little blood. Their tongues battled for dominance as he felt the White Demon move his hips against him,

loosening his strangle hold on his body.

Nighteagle began to thrust hard into the body under him even as his hand milked the ridged organ between them and his mouth drank the man's own suckling lips. He felt the pent up passion build between them as he the man shuddered under him, his far from virginal ass constricting on Nighteagle's sensitive manhood. He moaned as he lost control deep within the man, even as he felt a fist connect with the side of his head, stunning him with conflicting feelings.

Groaning, he collapsed on the man under him. His body was pushed off of the hard, sweaty man as he backed away from Nighteagle. He looked up to see confusion and anger warring in those blue eyes. He felt himself

pulled towards the man, captivated by that gaze for a moment before he shook himself.

“You’re Nigteagle?” came a surprisingly soft voice.

“Yes, and you are the White Demon,” Nigteagle said, shaking his head, trying to collect himself from the mind-blowing sex and blow to the head that had left him shaken.

“I’m Ari,” the man said, shaking his head.

“You’re not the White Demon?” Nigteagle asked sharply.

“It is only a title given to me by foreigners,” Ari said, shaking his head as he crouched down, ready to spring at Nigteagle.

“I’m a foreigner.”

“You’re a coward, taking me prisoner,”
Ari retorted.

“You are mine. I defeated you in
battle,” Nigteagle growled angrily.

“I fought you with honor, you should
have killed me,” Ari retorted, his light voice
holding menace in it.

“It is my right, you’re. . .”

Nigteagle’s words were drowned out
by the man’s cry of anger as he launched
himself at him. This time Nigteagle was ready
and hit the man in his temple, knowing that
having already been knocked out once, the
second time would be easier as he felt the man

collapse in his arms. He looked down at the man known as the White Demon and wondered what the hell had just happened.

~

A Warrior's Oath

Ari awoke in a large, spacious tent finding himself completely bound by a heavy set of chains connected to a spike driven in the ground. Grimacing in pain, he moved a little to look around the empty tent. The sun streaming through the small opening in the tent showed that it was still daylight as he tried to get his bearings.

His head felt fuzzy as he tried to straighten out the events in his mind. He clearly remembered the battle and the raven haired man that had disarmed him by, ironically, his beauty. Ari groaned at his stupidity at hesitating at seeing the stunning man's face. It had landed him naked in this tent, spiked to the ground like an animal.

He hadn't realized at first that his opponent was the legendary Nigteagle until he had awakened to find the man ogling him. If he hadn't been so furious with himself and his captor he would have been struck speechless by the man that had been standing before him.

His copper skin had almost seemed to glow as it stretched over a finely sculpted, lean body that was not over-muscled but still bespoke strength. His long, inky black hair hung down to

his ass, flowing around the man, curtaining his body, proclaiming his prowess as a warrior unparalleled in skill. High cheekbones combined with full lips and deep black eyes that spoke of animalistic lust as they had bore into him had made Ari almost forget who the man was.

It had been only his fierce anger at himself that had allowed him to snap the pathetic bonds that held him as he had launched himself at his captor. After that Ari's mind seemed to blur a little. It was only when he shifted his weight and he felt a spasm in his lower back did the memories begin to surface as he moaned, drawing up his knees and burying his head in arms.

He could feel his head pounding but it was nothing compared to knowledge of what

had happened with the alluring Nigteagle. When he had felt the first blow on his ass he had become completely hard, despite the fact the man spanking him was the enemy and a man he should hate above all else for destroying his clan. Yet his body responded to what Nigteagle had been doing it. His body had wanted to be taken by the man, but his mind screamed its protest.

He couldn't believe what they had done on the floor of this tent. The humiliation of not finding death in battle coupled with his enjoyment of his rape left him feeling hopeless and more defeated than he ever thought possible. He looked around the tent, searching for anything that could help him escape. Getting up he saw only a richly decorated rug, pillows, and a three chests in the room. Pulling with all his might, he dragged the spike out of the ground

and went to the chests, his chains jangling. Inside among clothing, jewelry, and surprisingly a couple of books, he found his braided hair and an intricately crafted dagger. Holding the remains of his long hair he felt despair overwhelm him.

Without pausing he swiftly knelt and took a deep breath, closing his eyes as he prepared to plunge the knife into him, unwilling to live as a sex slave for any man and dishonor himself further. Suddenly, he felt a large hand wrap around his hand, crushing it as the dagger fell from him. His eyes snapped open to see Nigteagle staring at him, his eyes holding unparalleled anger as he the man slapped him hard, sending him backwards.

“Don’t you dare even think about it,” Nigteagle growled. “How in the hell did you pull out that stake?”

“Let me die,” Ari growled, pushing himself up.

“No, you’re mine now,” Nigteagle growled.

Ari stood up with dignity and grace despite his naked state, bloody lip and chains, to look at the man uncompromisingly.

“I’m a warrior of the Iolair. There is no surrender, only death to the defeated. You insult me, my clan, and yourself by doing this,” Ari said in a calm, deadly voice.

Nigteagle stared at him, his eyes unreadable in the silence. The moments stretched past as the two glared at each other. He knew that he had hit a nerve with the man as

he watched Nigteagle's face closely. He knew that the Horse Lords rarely took captives, often killing everyone in their path and desecrating the enemies' bodies if the foe was unworthy of respect. They had an honor code similar to the Iolair's that was strictly followed; Nigteagle had stepped over that code by taking him captive. He wasn't some shepherd, but a warrior and worthy enemy, to take him as a bed slave brought dishonor to both of them.

“The funeral pyres have been lit,” Nigteagle said abruptly.

“Good, even if my people died at least they took many with them on their voyage,” Ari said with satisfaction.

“Your peoples' pyres,” Nigteagle elaborated as Ari lost his anger at the man to

shock.

He had never heard of the Horse Lords honoring their enemies with their own dead. They often decapitated their victims, denying them the afterlife. For Nigteagle to order his people burned with their honor intact shocked Ari to his core. It was something he was not sure even he would have done.

“May I go?” Ari asked quietly.

“That is why I came, follow me,” Nigteagle said with a nod.

“Like this!” Ari asked, looking down at his naked body and heavily chained arms.

Nigteagle looked at him for a moment, as if weighing something in his mind before

going over to the chest and throwing him a set of pants. Ari pulled them on, noting that they fit perfectly except for being a little long. Eyeing the man he realized that they were very similar as he watched Nigteagle exit the tent.

Following through the maze of brightly colored dome-shaped tents, Nigteagle led him to the outskirts of his camp, where the smell of burnt flesh overwhelmed Ari and his stomach rolled in protest. Funeral pyres covered the valley as he watched them burn. He noticed that hundreds of warriors worked to clean up the battlefield as Iolair and the horse clan were laid together on huge wood pyres and set afire, mingling the ashes of the fallen together on the wind.

He felt tears come to his eyes at the unexpected sight, and the realization that almost

all his clan was gone except a few who remained hidden. He felt crushing despair that he wasn't sure he would ever be able to endure hit him, and he sank to the ground.

Nighteagle stood beside him, saying nothing as silent tears rolled down Ari's face as he mourned the death of his people. The sun sank low in the sky as Ari lost track of the time in his grief. He felt a surprisingly gentle hand grab his arm, lifting him from the ground. Ari look up to see the greatest of the Horse Lords look at him with sympathy that held no pity or gloating.

“They died with honor, taking a third of their enemy with them,” Nighteagle said gently before turning and pulling the Ari along.

Ari stumbled a little as his mind whirled

in surprise. This man was completely unexpected, every word and action confused him. It was if the man was trying to comfort him in his grief, yet he was the enemy. Nigteagle had not destroyed his clan like he had expected, but given them an honorable death of a worthy enemy, and yet he denied Ari that same death.

He was young, almost too young to have accomplished all that he had in so brief of a time. He was gorgeous beyond belief. Ari closed his eyes, shuddering a little as the thoughts of what they had done together filled his mind. The taste of blood from the man's lips and the hot skin pressed against his own danced in his thoughts.

He quickly opened his eyes, trying to banish the thoughts of the sex that had been almost a battle between the two men, to see he

was being led to raised platform filled with brightly colored cushions. Nigteagle sat down and pushed Ari down on the lower step beneath him, pulling Ari close to his leg. Ari tried to pull away until Nigteagle leaned over him.

“Resist, and I will strip you naked and collar you like a disobedient dog,” Nigteagle hissed.

Ari glared up at the man, wondering if Nigteagle would actually be able to follow through with his words. Looking up at the man’s hard face he knew it wasn’t worth the risk. At least he had some small bit of pride and clothes left to him. To be stripped of even that in front of the hundreds of men celebrating before the bonfire would be too much to bear.

Ari looked around at the horse clan,

ignoring the warmth of Nigteagle's leg pressed against his side. They were a fierce people with angular faces and coppery skin. All of them dressed in leather in varying degrees of browns and blacks, and all had swords and daggers strapped to their hips and backs. He noticed most of the men had long hair braided with beads and feathers, denoting their skills in battle, but none wore their hair loose and flowing like Nigteagle. It surprised him that he saw no women among the warriors. The women of his people wouldn't have stood for being left out of such a celebration and battle.

“Where are the women?” Ari asked finally.

“Women? Where else, in their tents and tending the injured as is proper,” Nigteagle replied.

“You mean after they finish tending the injured they will join your celebration?” Ari asked confused.

“Of course not. No respectable woman would want to be here,” Nigteagle said, irate as he looked down at Ari.

Some of his confusion must have shown on his face for Nigteagle’s face softened a little.

“Ah, I understand now. Your women fight along side your men?”

“Of course! The women would kill me if I stood in their way,” Ari said.

“In this we are different. Our woman

live to serve their husbands and fathers. They do not fight, they bear our children,” Nigteagle explained.

Ari frowned at this, surprised that the horse clan women would agree to such a situation. It seemed unnatural, to oppress a segment of ones clan in such a way.

“Are there not some among you that do not fight?” Nigteagle asked curiously.

“No, our women are equals among us, and are respected for their gift of creating life,” Ari answered.

“Strange, your women are feared by us. They are strange and deadly,” Nigteagle commented.

“Yes,” Ari agreed with a smile, thinking of Gislia. She had almost broken his ribs when he had told her she must not fight in the battle.

“We found a group of your women in the forest,” Nigteagle said causally.

“What?!” Ari exclaimed jumping to his feet.

He felt Nigteagle’s eyes pin him as he fear rushed through his body. Gislia and his son Var, were they dead? He knew that Gislia and the other women would fight if found. They would revel in the battle.

“Our men didn’t approach them, afraid of such fierce women, yet they have been marked,” Nigteagle continued in a calm voice.

Ari trembled, wondering what this man wanted, for he wanted something from Ari. He could see it in the man's face, the lust and something more.

“What do you want?” Ari asked, defeated, fearing the answer.

“Your word as a warrior you will cease trying to kill yourself or run away. Your clan will forswear revenge until they have recovered their numbers,” Nigteagle said softly.

“You want me to be your obedient bed slave,” Ari said emptyly, his worst fear realized in the man's words.

“No, if you want your freedom you must defeat me as a warrior, not as a coward running,” Nigteagle said, his voice filled with

pride.

“I kill you then your warriors will kill me.”

Suddenly Nigteagle stood up on the platform and bellowed in a deep voice for silence. Within moments the crowd was silent as Nigteagle’s gaze swept his people.

“We have won a glorious victory over the ancient legendary race of the Iolair,” Nigteagle started as the men cheered. “I have defeated the White Demon and taken him captive to prove our strength as warriors. He is ours until the day he defeats me, on that day he is free, until then our strength is without question,” Nigteagle shouted, to be greeted by the strong, enthusiastic cheers of his men.

“Bring out the other captives,”

Nighteagle commanded.

Ari watched in a daze as three men and two women were pulled before the platform, still naked and covered in blood and blue paint. Nighteagle looked down at him at him questioningly.

“I swear on my warrior pride that I will not kill myself or run until I have gutted your sorry ass,” Ari growled.

Nighteagle nodded.

“Then should I free them?” Nighteagle whispered arching his eyebrow.

“You know you cannot. They would never leave without a fight, their honor would

not let them,” Ari hissed.

“The White Demon has bought your honor. Get them swords,” Nigteagle commanded, descending the platform, unsheathing his sword.

Ari looked at the faces of the captives, realizing with a start that one of them was Strum. The man was looking at him with an unreadable expression on his grim face. Strum of all people knew him the best, and knew what was going through him as Nigteagle approached them.

Singling out one of the women with shoulder length hair, Ari winced in recognition at the girl who was never the best at sword work. He watched as she took the offered sword and without missing a beat charged at Nigteagle.

With only three blows Nigteagle easily slipped his sword between her ribs. Ari watched her battle with pride, knowing she had died trying to defeat the enemy despite the odds against her, she had attacked without hesitation.

Each battle followed the same pattern as his people were completely overpowered by the greatest of all the Horse Lords. Finally only Strum remained, gazing not at the battles that had taken place but only at Ari. He had felt the man's eyes on him but he had watched his people fight and die before him, honoring their courage with his attention, as he burned them into his mind never to forget.

Strum took the offered weapon and instead of charging watched Nigteagle, measuring his opponent. Nigteagle raised his sword and struck with deadly force, which

Strum countered easily. Ari watched the dance between the two, his pride at his former lover swelling within him as Strum fought with skill and speed. He could see the ghost of the man he had used to love with such passion in the powerful dance between the two.

Steel grated on steel as their swords met, pushing against each other, seeking an advantage, then Ari saw Strum's mouth move, speaking to Nigteagle. The words were lost within the cheering of the crowd as rage ignited in Strum's eyes as he pushed Nigteagle back. Ari knew in that moment Strum had lost, even as his blade battered at Nigteagle's defense. He had lost to himself and whatever Nigteagle had said to him. The rage gave him strength but took away his reason, and he slashed wildly. It was over in a second as Nigteagle slipped his sword

in Strum's unguarded right side, the sword biting deep into the man's side, cleaving him into the middle.

Ari watched as Strum crumpled on Nigteagle's sword, his wide eyes looking into Ari's as the life went out of them. The crowd roared its approval as Nigteagle cleaned his sword and returned to the platform. Ari sank to the floor, dazed at the death of Strum and the events of the day.

"He was your lover?" Nigteagle asked quietly after the people's attention had turned back to the celebration.

"My former lover and teacher," Ari said emptily.

"He asked the price you paid,"

Nighteagle said, drinking deeply from his ale horn.

“What did you tell him?”

“You paid with your honor and body,”
Nighteagle replied steady.

“That is a lie,” Ari protested angrily.

“You will pay repeatedly with your body until you defeat me or I release you. It is no lie and there is no escape. You knew that when you agreed,” Nighteagle answered, undisturbed by Ari’s accusation.

“I will never willingly give you my body,” Ari retorted.

“It doesn’t matter if you are willing, I

will have you,” Nigteagle said without mercy.

“Not without a fight,” Ari said grimly.

“I look forward to it,” Nigteagle grinned.

The celebration continued unabated as Nigteagle drank and even sang occasionally for his men. His deep baritone voice strangely soothing as his men listened in rapt attention to their leader’s voice. Ari remained quiet, observing the interaction between Nigteagle and his clan, and saw that above all else his people respected and adored him. He had no doubt if Nigteagle ordered it that his men they would enter the forest they hated and attack the last of his clan.

“It is late. There are three hours left till

dawn, and when the sun breaks over the horizon you must be back here or you forfeit your honor, life, and the lives of your clan. Go to your people and tell them of our bargain, for I do not want to slaughter the last of your people until they are truly capable of defeating me,” Nigteagle said as he unlocked the chains on Ari’s wrists.

Ari nodded and stood up. He looked down at the man who was so confident in himself to keep the White Demon of Iolair captive, and who would allow his enemy to survive only so they could grow stronger. He couldn’t help but feel respect for the man despite who he was.

Nigteagle led him to the edge of the camp and Ari turned without a word and ran. He knew that it would take most of his time to get to where his people were and return before

the sun rose in the sky. He felt the pain of Nigteagle's entry of him keenly as he ran. His body ached and his head pounded from being knocked unconscious twice in one day. It had been a terrible day, and he feared there was worse to come.

He had told Nigteagle he wouldn't have his body without a fight, yet he wasn't confident that he could hold to those words. If Nigteagle hadn't been the enemy he would have been a dream come true for Ari. He had a strength that could match and even surpass Ari. Although Ari doubted that Nigteagle could always beat him in every match, for he suspected that in sword skills they were evenly matched, he still was by far the most powerful opponent Ari had ever crossed swords with. In the short time Ari had been allowed to observe

the man he had noticed a quick wit and intelligence that pulled at him. But more than anything he had felt it when Nigteagle had taken him. The overwhelming need to dominate Ari and acquire him at any cost.

Nigteagle's lust was like a bonfire compared to Strums gentle candlelight. Nigteagle's fierce, almost brutal touch had made Ari tremble in wanton desire. He had wanted to be taken and hurt by the powerful, handsome man, and he wasn't sure if he would be able to control his perverse desires. He was very much afraid of what this man would come to mean to him. No matter what happened, were he to killed the man and be set free or remain a captive, one thing was sure, his time as clan leader of the Iolair was over. He had surrendered his honor for the chance that his son

would grow old and become a fierce warrior of the clan.

He had willingly submitted to slavery, if only temporarily, for a chance for his people. Even if he won his freedom he would never be able to return to the Iolair again. He had cried for his people but even as he ran he couldn't cry for himself.

When he finally arrived in the outskirts of the Iolair camp he was hailed by the sentries and found a sword pointed at his throat until they recognized him. Suddenly he found himself wrapped up in one of the sentry's arms as she called to the others.

Gislia appeared in her soft cotton shift, little Var in her arms as she looked at Ari measuringly, noting his shorn hair.

“We couldn’t have won,” Gislia said flatly as others crowded around.

“No, the Iolair are all dead. I watched the Horse Lords’ leader, Nigteagle, battle the last five captives to the death,” Ari answered with pride.

“He allowed them honorably deaths?” Gislia asked in shock.

“He also burned our dead with their own,” Ari nodded.

“Thank the gods,” another woman said softly, tears in the eyes of those who surrounded him.

Gislia held out Var to him as he gently took his sleeping son in his arms, looking down at

the baby's face with a soft smile, forgetting for the moment everything but the precious bundle in his arms.

“Why are you here?” Gislia asked softly.

“The Iolair must rebuild themselves, Gislia. You must rebuild our clan and make them strong again. Do not seek vengeance until the day we are of equal numbers to the Horse Lords,” Ari said quietly.

“That will take generations!” Gislia protested, along with many of the others.

“Nigteagle knows you are here,” Ari said flatly, looking up at the pale woman.

“Then we will fight,” Gislia said angrily.

“Look at him Gisia. Look at your son, can he fight? Can most of the children here? I WILL NOT SEE THEM DIE,” Ari shouted as Var’s icy eyes snapped open to look up at his father.

“You must live and continue our clan. Do not let our culture die in vain. Rebuild us, make us strong, so one day you can avenge us and win,” Ari said quietly, rocking his son, who struggled in the cocoon of his blanket. “Do it for our children.”

“What about you? You are our leader, our soul.” Gisia said softly.

“A price had to be paid,” Ari said softly, offering his finger to his son, who promptly stuck it in his mouth.

“What price?” Gislia demanded.

“I belong to Nigteagle until I can defeat him,” Ari replied sadly.

“No, no you can’t,” Gislia’s voice high pitched in denial as others called out in shock and outrage.

“The price has been paid. Don’t make my sacrifice worthless, wife. Keep him safe, make him strong, through him I shall live with all of you,” Ari said, and gently disengaged his finger from his son’s firm grip.

“Promise me,” Ari commanded, looking deep within Gislia’s eyes, demanding compliance.

“I swear as a warrior, we will rebuild

our clan and raise your son,” Gislia said in a shaky voice as Ari nodded, looking at the others who remained quiet.

“This is my final command as your leader. Live and bring honor to our clan. Rebuild it so one day the Horse Lords will rue the day they ever tried to destroy us,” Ari said in a light, firm voice.

His people cheered as he passed Var back to his mother, looking down at the little face all scrunched up as he cried loudly. Ari leaned down and kissed the boy’s forehead before turning and running, the sound of his son’s wailing cries following him through the desolate forest.

Captive Warrior

“So you have returned,” Nigteagle said, looking at the man walking between the two sentries that had caught him returning to camp.

“I swore I would,” Ari said with a frown.

“Leave us and finish preparations,” Nigteagle said to his men with a wave of his hand. “Here, keep yourself ready for me.” Nigteagle tossed a small jar at him.

The man caught it and opened it as anger spread over his face. Nigteagle dodged

the jar as it flew back towards him. The man snarling at him.

“I’m not your whore,” Ari growled.

“Suit yourself, but if you don’t you will be the one to suffer most, because I’m sure not going to care one way or the other. Get some sleep, we will leave at midday. You may ride in the wagons with my children,” Nigteagle said with a smile, starting to leave the tent only to find the man stepping in front of him.

“I will not ride in your wagons,” Ari said firmly.

“You will do what I tell you,” Nigteagle said with a frown.

“No, I will not let you humiliate me. I

know very well only women and small children ride in your wagons, those you consider weak. I will not do it, bastard,” Ari retorted angrily.

“You will. I will not give you a horse,” Nigteagle said, his anger rising at the impertinence of the man.

“You will or you will kill me.”

“Don’t tempt me,” Nigteagle growled.

“I will not do it,” Ari said his eyes flashing.

Suddenly Nigteagle’s temper snapped at this man who wanted a precious horse given only to warriors of the horse clan. He had no idea what he was asking for, this foreign White Demon who argued with him. No one had ever

dared argue with him in years. He found his large hands pressed against the pale white neck of the man in front of him. Anger at this man's defiance exploding within him.

He glared down at the ice blue eyes that held no fear as he choked the man. Instead of struggling the man only glared at him as he made small gasping sounds. Watching those bright blue eyes he saw more than anger flash through them, the unmistakable glow of desire. Nigteagle shoved at the man, sending him to the floor as he coughed and gasped for air even as Nigteagle pushed him to his knees, ripping his pants down to expose his ass.

Opening his own pants before the man could gain his bearings Nigteagle pushed himself into the man. Ari cried out in pain as Nigteagle thrust repeatedly into him, enjoying

the man's cries. Reaching around he was surprised to find the man hard despite his cries of pain. Nigteagle began to stroke Ari as he continued his brutal acquisition of the man under him. Then Ari bucked back against him, grinding his ass against his invading organ even as he felt a hot stream of liquid fill his hand. Nigteagle tensed, feeling the power of his own orgasm rock him to his core.

Ari collapsed on the floor as Nigteagle looked down at his hand, panting. Lifting the white covered hand he stared at the liquid even as he felt the man turn over and face him. Looking down at the angry blue eye he brought his fingers to his mouth and licked them, tasting for the first time the seeds of a man. Closing his eyes in perverted pleasure he licked his fingers clean.

Shuddering at his actions he opened his eyes to see the man staring at him with unreadable blue eyes. He felt his whole being tremble at that gaze, as he wondered if this man truly was a demon who had ensorcelled him.

“You will ride with me, but you must care for your horse as you would your child. If you do not I will give you to all of men to gang rape before I behead you,” Nigteagle said in a deadly tone as he glared down at the man.

Ari nodded as Nigteagle rose, tying his pants and leaving the tent. Outside he stood in the sunlight, shaking with his encounter. He had never felt this way about another man. He had enjoyed mounting any man he defeated, proving his superiority over them and humiliating them by forcing them into sex, but this man, this White Demon, was different.

He knew once he gave the man his sword back it would only be a matter of time before he defeated Nigteagle. This man was his equal, but more than that this man was him. He sensed it, that the man was only truly alive when he fought. Ari craved to be dominated, to find someone to take him to the limit of his abilities. Every time Nigteagle hurt and made him surrender in some form, the spark of desire lit within both of them. Nigteagle shuddered, thinking for the first time in his life he had met someone that matched him completely and totally, and he was an enemy.

The other Lords of the horse clan had already voiced their concerns over Nigteagle taking the man as a captive. It was unheard of to take captives beyond a day or two and one as

dangerous as the White Demon was foolhardy. Not to mention it stepped on the boundaries of honor to treat a warrior of such skill the way he was. Fucking a defeated member of the clan was one thing, but actively taking a foreign warrior as a bed slave was another. The other Lords believed that the man should be killed honorably and were more than a little upset with Nigteagle, although no one dared to voice his objections too loudly. Yet having tasted the man he knew one thing, he could never let this man go.

“This is StarShine,” Nigteagle said, handing the reigns to Ari.

Ari took the reigns and walked up to the gelding, holding out a hand to the horse. Sniffing

him, the horse looked at him placidly as Ari scratched him vigorously. The horse butted his chest in appreciation and Nigteagle watched in approval.

“Mount up, we are leaving. Here this is yours,” Nigteagle said, handing Ari his sword.

Ari took the sword in surprise, looking at Nigteagle, puzzled.

“You can’t defeat me without a sword,” Nigteagle said mildly, mounting his stallion.

Ari said nothing as he mounted up, wincing in pain. It was going to be a very long day, Ari thought sourly. He couldn’t believe that Nigteagle had given him his sword back. It now meant that he could attack the man at anytime. As they rode Ari thought about it, his mind

wondering when would be the best time.

As the day wore on Ari's pain increased, as did his anger. He hated riding and the pain it was causing. He felt frustrated by the events that seemed to flow around him. He knew it was foolish, but before he could stop himself he unsheathed his sword and looked over at Nigteagle, who had already responded to his threat.

Steel clashed against steel as Ari swung his sword at Nigteagle. They exchanged blows until his horse reared in panic at the noise surrounding him, and unseated Ari even as the men around them began to laugh. He felt Nigteagle's foot step on his wrist as he looked up to see open anger in the man's face.

He felt Nigteagle's knee connect with

his head and he fell backwards as the men laughed and cheered around him. Disoriented by the blow he didn't realize until he felt Nigteagle's rigid organ impale him that the man was fucking him like a dog in front of his men. He cried out in pain, feeling no pleasure at this third violent entry into his body. Between the rough sex and a day of riding Ari could only feel intense pain and humiliation at what the man was doing to him. The jeers of the men made his face burn in humiliation as he felt Nigteagle finish, pulling out of him with disgust.

“You are a fool, I thought you were better than this. Only a fool would attack a Horse Lord mounted. You risked injuring your horse for a battle you could never win. Get up and mount your horse. You will not dismount until we are done for the day. Remember this as

you ride, anytime you are defeated among us you will be mounted like the bitch that you are,” Nigteagle said with disgust as he turned away from Ari, and his men shouted and clapped.

Ari stood up slowly, raising his pants and picking up his sword. He looked around to see his horse's reigns in the hands of a smirking warrior. Taking them without a word he mounted his horse stiffly, feeling pain blossom inside of him. He carefully kept all emotion off of his face, determined not to let any of the men laugh further at his pain and humiliation. Nigteagle was right, he was a fool, he had let his impatience overrule his better judgment and he had paid the price for it.

The rest of the day went in a daze of pain and fatigue. He had very little sleep and the multiply blows to his head in the past two days

had left him disoriented. When Nigteagle finally called halt for the day he slid off the horse, barely aware of his surroundings. He mechanically groomed his horse until he felt a feather light touch on his arm.

“Come, Starfall will take him away. Nigteagle has asked me to care for you,” said a small, delicate woman with a huge bulging belly.

Ari let the woman lead him to Nigteagle’s tent and watched as she left and brought food and water. As he ate he felt a little of his strength return, and he studied the woman kneeling on the ground in front of him, her eyes downcast. She was so very small and delicate looking, with copper skin and light brown, short hair. She was like a fragile doll that could easily be broken.

“What is your name?” Ari asked.

“I am Graysparrow, Nigteagle’s second wife,” the woman said softly.

“His wife? And he asked you to attend his bed slave?” Ari said, incredulously, knowing if he had even thought of asking Gislia to attend Strum he would have ended up with a knee in his groin.

“You are not his bed slave, or any slave. You’re a fallen warrior of great strength. Nigteagle favors you, already he fights to see the clan recognize you so you may ride as one of us,” Graysparrow said quietly.

“As one of you? I’m Iolair, I will never be a Horse Lord,” Ari said dismissively.

“You ride one of our own. There is no place for you except as one of us. Nigteagle knows this as does everyone,” Graysparrow said.

“As one of you? He fucked me like a dog in front of everyone,” Ari said bitterly.

“As he did with Starfall, Nightwolf, Greyhawk, and many others. Any who would challenge Nigteagle faces that humiliation of submission,” Graysparrow replied.

“You mean it is common among your people to do that?” Ari said in disgust.

“You lost to him, everyone loses to him. It is his right to demand anything from the loser. Nigteagle uses sex to punish those who would challenge him, now few challenge him,”

Graysparrow explained.

Ari remained quiet, finishing his food as he thought on the woman's words. He could see the twisted logic in Nigteagle's actions. His relationship with Strum had been frowned upon because no young could be produced, but sex between the same gender was not taboo among his people, where women were considered equal. To suggest being on the receiving end of sex was degrading would get a man castrated by the women. Here, where they viewed women as second class clan members and weaker, the stigma of being fucked like one would be powerful and humiliating to a warrior. The risk of enduring what he had to a member of this clan would be a powerful deterrent to challenging Nigteagle.

“Thank you for the food,” Ari said when

he was finished.

“You have been hurt,” Graysparrow said softly, looking up at him with doe-like eyes.

“I have been hit in the head one to many times, it has made me disoriented,” Ari replied.

“Yes, I have herbs for that, but you have been hurt elsewhere as well,” Graysparrow nodded.

“I’m fine,” Ari said, blushing slightly, realizing what the woman meant.

“You are not fine, I know the damage Nigteagle can do,” Graysparrow said, shaking her head and frowning.

“You’re his wife, I guess you would,”

Ari said in disapproval, thinking of the man hurting this gentle woman.

“No, I am his wife and he treats all of us with gentleness and respect. He took Raindance as his third wife because he knew of my feelings for her,” Graysparrow said with gentle disapproval at Ari’s assumption.

Ari’s eyes widened in surprise at the implications of the woman’s words. It was obvious that once again he had misjudged the man who would allow his wife to love another.

“He wants me to see to you. He is concerned for you and the damage he has inflicted on you. He has never cared before about the other men, but you he does,” Graysparrow added, looking directly at Ari.

“What do you want to do?” Ari asked finally.

“I must clean you and apply some herbs to help the pain,” Graysparrow answered.

“No, I can’t let you do that. Besides, why would Nigteagle allow his wife around me and do something like that for me?” Ari asked suspiciously.

“I’m already pregnant, you could not sow seeds within me. Besides, you have honor beyond reproach, you would not disgrace yourself and me. I was the one that tended you after the battle and saw that you were ready for my husband, something he has never concerned himself with before you. Allow me to tend you, please let me ease your pain,” Graysparrow pleaded softly.

Ari looked away from the woman, feeling confusion at her words. What was he to this man? He thought he was a slave, but obviously that wasn't the case. Graysparrow truly seemed to care for her husband and he could tell she was trying hard to get him to accept her offer for Nigteagle.

“Very well,” Ari sighed.

Graysparrow smiled gently and got up. She returned with towels, warm water, and a small box. Ari removed his pants and got to his knees for the woman, leaning down and spreading his legs, feeling his face turn bright red. The woman worked quickly but gently, occasionally stroking his back as if to calm him. The death of his people, the parting from his son, Strum's death, the humiliation of the day's failed attack and rape, and now being naked and

vulnerable before this kind, gentle woman finally undid Ari, and he felt tears roll down his face. He felt Graysparrow move around in front of him and pull him to her small chest as he sobbed in her arms. He felt broken and defeated as he let the woman stroke his jagged short hair and croon softly to him.

Ari's tears had finally stopped when Nigteagle entered the tent to see the naked White Demon curled in his small wife's lap. It was obvious that the man had been crying and he noticed the bloody water and towels. Looking at his wife he noticed her shake her head slightly, indicating it wasn't his injuries that was bothering the man.

He watched the man quickly move away from his wife, looking up at him with

confusion. He looked so very worn and pale. Graysparrow gathered up everything and left the two of them alone. Nigteagle looked at the man, knowing that there was no way he could use him again in the condition he was in. Reaching down he gently touched the jagged line of his shoulder-length hair, only for the man to jerk away, his eyes wide and confused.

“Sleep my White Demon, and rest for tomorrow,” Nigteagle said, pointing to the bed of cushions and pillows before leaving the tent.

It was late into the night when he returned to find his captive curled on the bed, fast asleep. Nigteagle stripped out of his clothes and lay down next him, curling his body next to the sleeping man and wondering again what he was doing. Yet the warmth of the body next to him soothed him as he fell asleep.

It had been a week since he had unwillingly become a captive of Nigteagle. He rode with the man during the day and listened as he talked about his clan and his dreams for them. Ari in turn found himself drawn to the man despite the fact he shouldn't be. He was extremely bright and articulate, with the ability to draw Ari out of his anger to ask questions. As he listened he found that Nigteagle was a mirror of himself. Both leaders of warriors, both young and skilled, and both with a preference for men over women.

Nigteagle never spoke of it, but he could see the man's gaze that hardly ever looked at his beautiful wives, but lingered on the most handsome of his men. Yet strangely enough, the

man had not touched him once since the brutal rape in front of his men. He knew that Nigteagle had injured him, but he was surprised that the man had done nothing since then. Every night he had fallen asleep only to wake in the morning to find the very naked man curled around him.

Graysparrow continued to bring him food and medicine each evening, also spending time with him. Although the woman wasn't a warrior, he sensed beneath that gentle exterior lie a strength that could match any of the Iolair women's. She had proven to be a source of much information about Nigteagle. Through her he began to understand the man more clearly, and his motives. Just like Ari, Nigteagle thrived in battle, and because of that continued to look for even more powerful opponents.

Graysparrow suspected the real reason Ari was brought along was because deep in his heart Nigteagle wanted someone to push him to greater heights. A partner who could help him surpass his own limits, who could potentially defeat him.

Ari had not tried to attack the man again, never being able to find a time when they weren't riding or sleeping. Nigteagle spent all of his time with the Lords of the clan, ten other men who once ruled over individual branches of the horse clans, now united under Nigteagle. As soon as they dismounted the man disappeared, leaving Ari alone until Graysparrow came to him. It frustrated Ari to no end, but he knew eventually he would find a way to beat him.

Ari was surprised when Nigteagle

returned early to the tent. Reaching out, he grabbed Ari's arm, roughly pressing his lips to his own. Ari struggled against the man, denying his access to his mouth as he grabbed Nigteagle's long hair, pulling the man's face away from his own.

“Kiss me,” Nigteagle growled fiercely.

“I will never kiss a man that holds me prisoner,” Ari spat, jerking away from Nigteagle.

“You kissed me the first time,” Nigteagle growled, grabbing Ari's wrist and pulling the man to him again.

Ari answered with his fist, hitting Nigteagle on the side of his head, breaking his grip to spin and kick the man full force in the

ribs. Nigteagle grunted in pain, clutching at his ribs, glaring up at the man. Ari planted himself firmly, waiting for the man to come at him. He was surprised at the strength of the man's charge, pushing him back. Nigteagle hooked his foot, spilling Ari to the ground, and followed him quickly, sitting on his stomach and pinning his wrists together. Pulling out a thin rope from his belt pouch Ari felt his wrists being tied together, the rope biting into flesh.

“I have always wanted to ask you why you have rope scars around those wrists,” Nigteagle said when he was finished.

Ari remained quiet, glaring up at the man, noticing that the rope that bound him wasn't rope but a thin, flexible wire. The cool metal bit into his flesh as he tried to break it.

“Was it that man, what was his name? Did he do this to you?” Nigteagle asked seductively as Ari bucked, trying to dislodge the man from his mid-section.

Nigteagle leaned down trying to kiss him, but Ari bit his lip hard, causing him to draw back, cursing. Nigteagle roughly tossed him on his belly and pulled down his pants as Ari felt the powerful blow of a thick piece of stiff leather hit him.

“Stop it,” Ari shouted, twisting, trying to get away from him.

“No, you don’t,” Nigteagle said, pressing his knee into Ari’s back without missing a beat.

“What the hell are you doing?” Ari

demanded as he winced in pain.

“Exactly what you want,” Nigteagle hissed, throwing the strap aside and reaching under Ari to find the man half erect.

“That teacher of yours did this to you, didn’t he. It made you excited didn’t it?” Nigteagle whispered in his ear as he pulled on Ari’s balls, making him yelp in pain.

“Answer me.”

“Yes, damn you, but that doesn’t mean I want you,” Ari growled struggling.

Nigteagle went around to the front of the man, gazing intently into his eyes as Ari stood on his knees before him, glaring. He sank to his knees, grasping the man’s erection,

stroking it slowly, watching Ari's face closely.

“You lie,” Nigteagle whispered, bringing his wet hand up to Ari's mouth, showing the man the evidence of his lie.

“I hate you, you are the enemy, you keep me captive, and take away my honor,” Ari hissed.

“And I excite you,” Nigteagle replied, twisting the man's nipple between his fingers.

“

"What about you? Why do you keep me? Fuck me and get it over wi'h," Ari retorted“

"I want you, you excite me beyond all belief. I d'n't deny it, White Demon, I have done things with you I shoul'n't," Nigteagle whispered, his eyes glowing“ "I want to do more, I want to do things to you that would make my men look at me in disgust. Just as I have defiled your body, you have defiled my soul, White Dem”n."

He watched the m'n's breath quicken as he continued to play with his sensitive nipples. His gazed lowered to the red, throbbing erection that bobbed, leaking. He heard the man moan despite the look of anger in his face. He wanted to hear it again, he wanted to hear this m'n's pleasure. Leaning down, he put out his tongue tentatively, licking the leaking shaft, even as Ari arched toward him, his defiance gone for the moment.

What Nigteagle was doing was taboo beyond anything, yet he coul'n't stop himself, too lost within the m'n's moans of pleasure as his tongue swirled around the head of the hot organ. He drew the man into his mouth, sucking greedily even as he moved his tongue on the hot organ, tasting the salty liquid with pleasure, and Ari groaned above him.

Unable to bear it any longer he pulled off the man and went behind him, stripping his clothes off. Pushing him down roughly he sank into the man slowly, savoring the m'n's tight grip. Instead of riding Ari to completion as fast as he could, he fucked him slowly, reveling in the m'n's moans of pleasure. He had never felt such raw emotions pouring out of him. He wanted this man, he wanted everything about him to belong only to Nigteagle. Growling in pleasure he

heard Ari cry out loudly under him as he bucked against Nigteagle, clamping down hard on his member. The man shuddered under him, spilling his seeds into Nigteag'e's waiting hand, even as he let go of his pent up desire with a groan of pleasure.

Nigteagle licked his hand and pushed Ari onto his back, to take the softening member into his mouth even as Ari looked down at him in surprise. The greatest of all the Horse Lords lapped at his organ greedily. Ari closed his eyes and moaned not in pleasure but despair. He had given in to the demands of his body, and let Nigteagle take him without a fight. The man had been right, he had wanted it. He coul'n't deny it to himself. Nigteagle was the enemy, but he was also a man. A man with strength and intelligence that stirred A'i's very soul.

It was obvious that the man felt the same for him. He knew now from his talks with Graysparrow that what he was doing was beyond taboo. For him to even be here in Nigteag'e's tent was frowned upon, if anyone knew what the man was now doing he would be in disgrace. The only thing that held Nigteag'e's honor intact was everyone assumed that Ari was being taken by Nigteagle, to humiliate Ari.

This man had destroyed his people, but he had also spared them. He had given them what they wanted, glorious death in battle. Ari di'n't know what to do now. He coul'n't bring himself to admit that Nigteagle was more than an enemy. Not yet, maybe not ever.

A Warrior's Place

“Tomorrow we will fight,” Nigteagle said eagerly as he threw himself down into his bed, looking at Ari, who remained in the center of the tent, tense.

“What is it White Demon? I have not tried to fuck you since you broke my ribs over a month ago, you have your sword, and Graysparrow sees that you have anything you desire,” Nigteagle asked.

“I’m a warrior chained to you! I can’t fight, all I can do is follow behind you. Each time I try to challenge you, you disappear. I want to fight, to die,” Ari said angrily.

“Then fight tomorrow, kill to your heart’s content, although I doubt you will die.” Nigteagle shrugged.

“What do you mean? You will fight me tomorrow before the battle?” Ari asked hopefully.

“Of course not, we fight tomorrow, join us,” Nigteagle said, looking up at the man’s tense form.

“I can’t, you are the enemy. I can’t fight for you,” Ari said frustrated.

“Am I?” Nigteagle asked intently.

“You killed my people,” Ari retorted.

“And you killed mine, in battle, as it

should be.”

“Your people survived.”

“As did yours, White Demon,”
Nigteagle said, rising.

“Don’t call me that, I hate it,” Ari said.

“We fought as warriors do. The battle between our two peoples is over, for this generation at least. You want to fight again, the only thing stopping you is your own blindness. Fight alongside me tomorrow and renew your honor once again in the blood of the enemy,”
Nigteagle said, walking past him.

“The enemy?”

“Any man that wished to stick a blade in

your guts is your enemy,” Nigteagle said, exiting the tent, leaving Ari alone.

“Then I am your enemy, Nigteagle,” Ari whispered, wishing it were true.

Nigteagle had not touched him once since that night they both had paired almost as lovers instead of enemies. He had broken the man’s ribs when he had kicked him, and he was sure that the man was avoiding being injured again, for he often caught the man staring at him hungrily. Every time Nigteagle had come close enough to touch him he had tensed and prepared to fight, eventually he stopped trying, although a strange expression always came to his face that puzzled Ari.

Nigteagle had begun to sleep with his wives again, leaving Ari completely alone at

night, staring up at the domed tent and wondering what he wanted. Try as he might, he wanted to believe Nigteagle was his enemy, but deep in his heart he couldn't. The more time he spent with the man as they rode, the more he found himself drawn to him. He had even begun to tell the man a little about himself and his people, forgetting about who Nigteagle was. His body ached at night, his dreams filled with Nigteagle as he awakened wet with his desire.

He knew that Nigteagle was right, that the battle between their two peoples was over now. Nigteagle had given his people every respect to a fallen enemy. He wanted to fight, and the temptation of Nigteagle's offer pulled at him. If he didn't take up his sword and fight again he would be lessened.

Nighteagle entered his tent the next morning to find Ari standing completely naked before his wife as she held a brush against his skin, painting the man in blue. Nighteagle shook his head in wonder at the man who would enter battle completely naked.

“What are you doing wife?” Nighteagle asked lightly.

“Readying him for battle. Ari tells me it will not dishonor him to have a woman do this for him,” Graysparrow said softly, her hand trembling a little as she looked at the picture on the ground and continued her work.

“You can’t be serious? You are going like that?” Nighteagle asked, feeling his body stir at the sight of the naked man decorated in the

savage designs.

“Of course, armor is for the weak,” Ari said, looking down at Graysparrow’s work.

“Oh, I’m weak?” Nigteagle asked sharply.

“You are a Horse Lord, not Iolair, it is different,” Ari said with a shrug.

“Are you implying that the Iolair are better?” Nigteagle growled.

“Fifteen hundred of your armored mounted men died to kill five hundred of my people, Nigteagle,” Ari stated, looking up at Nigteagle defiantly, surprised to hear the man laugh.

“You are right, still, I would prefer if you didn’t go naked,” Nigteagle commented.

“You trust me to go? I could turn on you in the battle,” Ari said seriously.

“You won’t. Your honor would not permit it. The others are worried, but I am not,” Nigteagle replied casually.

Ari remained quiet as Graysparrow rose, gathering up the paint. Ari looked at the woman and smiled.

“Thank you, you did almost as well as my own wife would have,” Ari said, watching the woman blush and leave the tent.

“You have a wife?” Nigteagle asked curiously.

“Yes,” Ari said, picking up his sword.

“You never mentioned her, and what about that teacher of yours?” Nighteagle asked.

“She agreed to bear me a child, nothing more. As soon as she conceived she choose another, just as I had. She is strong and proud of her status as the mother of the clan chief’s child,” Ari replied.

“She lives then?”

“Yes, with my son,” Ari said neutrally.

“Is that why you reject me so fiercely?” Nighteagle asked, approaching Ari, wanting to touch the naked man.

“No,” Ari said in an even voice.

Nighteagle reached out to touch the man's painted chest as clear blue eyes stared at him.

“You could force me,” Ari whispered.

“Yes, and you could break more of my ribs.”

“That is why you stay away?”

“No. Come, it is time,” Nighteagle said shakily as he turned and walked out of the tent, hearing the man follow behind him.

Ari looked down at his body and sighed at the mess, wishing there was a lake nearby where he could soak the gore, paint, and other

nameless liquid off. Looking over, he watched as Nigteagle stripped off his light armor while Graysparrow waited patiently to work on the deep sword cut on his leg.

“You never answered my question, Nigteagle,” Ari said as he grabbed up a towel and began the long process of cleaning up from the battle.

“What question?” Nigteagle hissed as Graysparrow pulled the cloth of his clothes away from his wound.

“Why do you stay away?” Ari asked, all his attention on cleaning.

“Do you want me to stay? Besides that, you didn’t answer my question either.” Nigteagle said, irritated as he looked down at

the large slash on his right leg.

“Nigteagle stays away because of me,” Graysparrow broke into the conversation quietly, looking over at Ari.

“Hush Graysparrow,” Nigteagle said gently.

“What does she mean?”

“It is nothing,” Nigteagle replied testily.

“Raindance is angry with me for spending so much time here with you at my husband’s request, she tells others there is more between you two than is thought. I asked Nigteagle to stay with us to prove Raindance’s accusations wrong,” Graysparrow explained.

The silence stretched out as they all remained quiet, focused on their tasks rather than a subject none were willing to touch too closely.

“Damn it woman, you could be more gentle,” Nigteagle growled as Graysparrow scrubbed at the open wound.

“It must be cleaned, husband,” Graysparrow said hesitantly, stopping.

“Stop being such a child, she is only trying to help you,” Ari said, watching the two from across the tent as he washed the gore off of his body.

“How can you make it through a battle like that without a scratch?” Nigteagle demanded crossly, changing the subject.

Ari shrugged, remaining quiet. He had suspected that rumors of what they were doing alone in the same tent would eventually start, although he was surprised that one of Nigteagle's wives would be the source of it. Men of the Horse Lords shared there tents with women alone, and for two men to stay together was unheard of. It was ironic that among his people this wouldn't have been a problem, yet they weren't among his people, but Nigteagles's.

He had fought at Nigteagle's side. The man had deliberately dismounted just to fight at his back. He had felt exhilaration as they both slashed their way through their opponents with a violent joy. For the first time in a month Ari had finally felt alive again. Nigteagle was right, the joy of battle was something he needed, and he

was glad he hadn't denied himself it. He had felt a savage delight as he tested his skills against the men that dared to attack him.

In the battle Ari had a revelation as he felt Nigteagle's broad back almost against his own. He had over the course of the month come to love this enemy Horse Lord. As they fought together the term enemy slipped from his thoughts, replaced only by the word Nigteagle. Yet they were among a people that saw their relationship as weakness. He knew without a doubt things couldn't stay the way they were. Something had to be done and soon.

“I want to fight you, Nigteagle,” Ari said quietly.

“Not now you aren't, if you haven't noticed I'm getting my hide sewn shut again.

I'm not as lucky as you" Nigteagle grimaced.

"Soon, Nigteagle," Ari said, undeterred.

"You want to kill me that bad?" Nigteagle asked quietly as Graysparrow gasped, looking at Ari, distraught.

"I have kept my word Nigteagle, you must keep yours," Ari said, looking at Nigteagle intently. "I want to live again," Ari said softly.

"Very well, tomorrow we will cross blades," Nigteagle answered looking away from the man's haunted eyes.

Ari quietly put on a pair of pants and carried his wash water out of the tent, dumping it in the waste area. He was almost back to the

tent, lost in thought, and he didn't notice the man coming towards him until the man grabbed his upper arm roughly. Looking up at the young man that he recognized as Starfall, he tried to pull away.

“Don't even try it bitch. I want to see why you're so special,” Starfall snarled, trying to pull him.

Ari took one look at the man before easily breaking his grip and pushing Starfall away from him in disgust. Starfall charged him and Ari easily avoided him, tripping the angry youth and watching him crash to the ground even as a crowd started to form around them.

“What the hell is going on here?” Nigteagle shouted, approaching through the crowd that opened for him. Ari noted that five

more holes in the crowd were created as more of the Lords of the Horse clan also approached.

“I tried to take this slave and he refused me,” Starfall accused, looking at Ari angrily as he stood up.

“This man is no slave,” said one of the Lords with steely gray hair and a hawk face.

“This is why we protest, Nigteagle” added yet another younger Lord.

“You thought to make this man submit to you before you have fought him Starfall, this is not of the old ways,” Nigteagle said, deadly quiet as the crowd stood silent.

“He has already been defeated,” Starfall spat.

“By me, Starfall, by me. You want to mount him, then defeat him,” Nigteagle said, tossing Ari a sword.

Starfall unsheathed his sword angrily and charged at Ari.

“I can beat you. You’re just some filthy foreigner that fights naked like a barbarian,” Starfall screamed.

Ari mentally sighed at the young warrior. Over the course of the month he had seen the boy many times as he rode next to Nigteagle. Although Ari had talked with very few other people from the horse clan, he had observed them as they often rode and talked to Nigteagle. Starfall was one of the few that had always glared fiercely at Ari and seemed to resent him. Ari had asked Nigteagle about it

once only for the man to laugh and say the boy just wanted to be a bitch.

Now the meaning of Nigteagles's words became clear by the young warrior's actions. Starfall was jealous of Ari and the rumors that were circling about him and Nigteagle. The boy wanted to hurt and humiliate him. Ari tested Starfall, finding the limits of the young man's talents, and was surprised by his skill. Although Ari had no trouble dealing with the man's attacks, he knew that there were very few that would be able to say the same.

Finally he stepped up his pace and drove the young man back, disarming him with a move that would ordinarily dismember the boy's fingers if done by someone with less skill than Ari. He watched the stunned disbelief appear on

the boy's face as the crowd around them roared in approval. Ari looked around in surprise at the response as Nigteagle moved to his side.

“We appreciate a good fight. Everyone knew Starfall was in the wrong. It is your right to take him now,” Nigteagle said softly.

“You have got to be kidding! I'm not of the horse clan, I'm not going to fuck that boy,” Ari said, appalled.

“Yes, you are. The Lords are watching you carefully, you must. If you don't, I ride you myself in front of everyone here and now,” Nigteagle said seriously.

Ari looked down at the angry young man and sighed.

“Fine, but not here in public,” Ari relented.

“Get up Starfall, Ari is being generous, it seems,” Nigteagle glared.

Ari could hear the disappointment in the crowd that the show was over. As he followed behind Nigteagle and Starfall he heard some of the men he passed congratulate him, look disapprovingly at Starfall.

Ari followed Nigteagle into a huge domed tent to find that seven of the Horse Lords were already seated, some of which he had seen at the battle only moments before. It appeared that they were to witness Starfall’s humiliation. Ari could only shake his head, he wasn’t part of the horse clan and he wasn’t about to hurt the young man, despite his actions.

“This is outrageous, he isn’t of our clan, he is the enemy. He obeys Nigteagle and follows him like a woman, and you’re going to let him humiliate me!” Starfall said desperately.

“He is a proven warrior, who is bound to Nigteagle by his honor, nothing more. His skills are undeniable and he fights with our clan now, not against it. He killed many this day in our name. His skills are undeniable, Starfall, it is his right for such an outrageous breach of honor,” the steel haired Lord answered firmly.

Starfall looked among the assembled faces, seeing no help amidst them. Pulling down his pants angrily he knelt on the floor in front of Ari, his legs spread apart. Ari grimaced, looking down at the offered ass, feeling no desire.

“Get up Starfall, I’m not a Horse Lord,”

Ari said in disgust as the Lords murmured. “I’m not going to fuck you like a dog, you will be taken by an Iolair warrior. Strip and come here.”

Starfall stood up, looking at Ari distrustfully as he removed his leather jerkin. Ari undid his pants and pushed the young warrior to the floor, facing his soft organ. Starfall tried to pull away in disgust as Ari held him firm.

“You are the loser, you must obey,” Ari grated, angry at himself and the situation.

Starfall reluctantly opened his mouth and took him fully into his mouth. Ari kept his hand on the young man’s head as he slid his mouth inexpertly down the length of him. Ari felt himself grow slowly as he stroked the boy’s head, while his audience watched with expressionless faces. Ari finally felt himself

completely hard as Starfall worked his mouth on the top half of his large member.

Ari pulled the young warrior to his feet and spun him to face the Lords and Nigteagle, who watched in surprise as he moved his hand down to lift the half erect organ for them to see. Ari molded his body to the young man's back as he stroked the boy's erection, while his other hand lightly teased the boy's nipples to hardness in front of their audience.

Ari could see their shocked expressions at his actions as he played with Starfall's body in front of them. Starfall turned his head to the side, avoiding the peering eyes, exposing the side of his neck for Ari, who slid his mouth down the coppery skin, leaving little bite marks even as he heard a gasps of shock come from his audience. Starfall gave a little moan as Ari noticed his

hand getting wetter and wetter. Ari brought his wet hand around to the young man's ass gently, inserting his slick fingers as the boy gasped. Looking around the room he saw a massive chest standing waist tall. He pulled Starfall over to the chest as he stripped his pants off and sat down, while the young man looked at him, his anger gone, replaced by lust.

“Sit on my lap,” Ari commanded.

Starfall started to climb on him as Ari shook his head, turning the young man to face his audience. Ari remained motionless as Starfall grabbed him, and after a few fumbling attempts managed to get the tip of Ari's leaking organ into him. Starfall panted as he slowly lowered himself onto Ari, while his audience watched avidly. Finally, the young man had taken his full

girth into him as Ari brought his hand around to gently stroke his partner.

“Fuck me little warrior,” Ari commanded, pushing his hips up a little.

Starfall began to move, sliding up and down on Ari. It wasn't long before Starfall had lost all sense of dignity and was gasping and moaning continuously as Ari stroked his manhood, and he bounce wildly on the organ embedded in him. Starfall let out a loud cry as he shot a copious amount of seed down on the priceless rug beneath them.

Panting, the young man hung on Ari's cock, limp, as he turned the young warrior around to face him. Ari looked at Nigteagle, who was staring at them fiercely, as he lowered his lips onto Starfall's, kissing the man deeply as

he thrust into the boy. He heard Nightfall gasp as Ari let go of Starfall to see the man completely tense and his eyes glazed. Ari knew that he had just had a powerful orgasm just by watching Ari's performance, and Ari smiled a little.

Standing up with Starfall in his arms he felt his muscles quiver at the weight as he began to thrust, feeling arms wrap tightly around his neck. Starfall almost screamed, not in pain, but at the pleasure of what Ari was doing with him, lost completely in his lust. Looking directly at Nigteagle as he rammed himself into Starfall he let go of himself, throwing his head back in pleasure as he felt the seed flow into the young, defeated warrior as the man's legs wrapped around him tightly.

Starfall let go of his tight hold and slid

off of Ari's body. He grabbed the young man and turned him to directly face the Lords, to show them Starfall's new erection. Ari stroked the man, looking at his audience, noticing that each one of the men had a huge bulge that their tight leather pants could not hide. He felt Starfall shudder intensely, his white liquid spilling into Ari's hand as he moaned softly.

Ari brought his hand up to Starfall's mouth and the boy licked tentatively at the liquid until Ari drew his hand away and brought it to his own mouth. Looking directly at the Horse Lords he slowly licked the white cream from his fingers as a couple of the men groaned, obviously lost within their own orgasms at the sight of Ari's actions.

Once his hand was clean he let go of

Starfall to let the man sink to the ground, panting. Ari looked at the stunned faces of his audience, his face serious as he stood before them naked.

“Among my people there is no shame to loving a man or woman. It is the greatest gift to be able to give your partner pleasure and hear them moan delight at your actions, no matter the gender. You wanted me here to shame this man, I came here to show you that there is no shame in uniting your body with another, only pleasure,” Ari said in a firm, uncompromising tone that made the men in front of him squirm in discomfort.

Ari retrieved his pants and went over to the young warrior looking dazed on the ground. Ari knelt down and kissed the young man gently.

“Thank you for the gift of your body young one, I bear no grudge against you and hope that you felt the same,” Ari said as he rose from the ground and looked at the men in front of him.

“I’m not a dog or a woman. I am a warrior, if you doubt that cross swords with me, and see who is better,” Ari threatened and turned, walking out of the tent.

“I think I would rather lose to him than win,” said one of the Lords softly, looking at the exit.

“Yes,” another agreed looking at Starfall.

“You must free him Nigteagle,” the steel haired Horse Lord said firmly.

“No, I will never free him,” Nigteagle said in a shaky voice, staring at Starfall, shaking his head in denial. “I can’t.”

Before any could answer Nigteagle almost ran from the tent. When he arrived at his own he found Ari in the center of the tent. With five quick strides he grabbed the man, pressing his mouth to Ari’s only to once again feel resistance.

Ari jerked his head away from him, pushing against his chest. Nigteagle let go of Ari, confused as he looked at the man.

“Why, you kissed Starfall? Why,” Nigteagle asked desperately.

“I will not kiss my captor, you hold my freedom, Nigteagle,” Ari said sadly.

“I love you,” Nigteagle blurted out, unthinking.

“Then fight me Nigteagle, free me.” Ari said, staring at him with clear blue eyes.

“I can’t! I can’t do that,” Nigteagle said angrily, pushing Ari down to the ground.

Ari lay on the ground, motionless, staring up at Nigteagle sadly as Nigteagle stripped him of his clothes.

“Why aren’t you fighting me?” Nigteagle demanded.

“Fight me, damn you,” Nigteagle said as he looked down at Ari’s limp naked body.

“Only with my sword, Nigteagle. Do

what you want to me,” Ari said as he closed his eyes.

Nighteagle backed away from the man, all desire flowing out of him. Ari didn't understand, he couldn't free him and lose him. If Ari was free he would leave, and Nighteagle couldn't bear it. He wanted this man with him forever. He hadn't stayed away because of the rumors, he had stayed away because Ari hadn't wanted him. He knew that he could force the man's body, but he wanted more than that from the White Demon of the Iolair. He wanted this man's heart, he wanted his acceptance. He couldn't fight Ari, he might lose. He didn't care if Ari killed him, but he did care if the man left him. He couldn't bear that thought, this man who matched him so perfectly.

“Nighteagle,” came a high pitched

female voice from outside the tent.

“Raindance? What is it?” Nigteagle asked shakily, looking at Ari.

“It’s Graysparrow, she is in labor and it does not go well,” Raindance’s frantic voice penetrated Nigteagle’s mind.

Getting up, he walked out of the tent, leaving the Ari on the ground, tears leaking out of his closed eyes.

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A Warrior's Freedom

Ari sat in the middle of the tent, waiting for Nigteagle to return, worried for Graysparrow. He knew that giving birth was dangerous, and Raindance's frantic voice held fear in it. The thought of the young woman dying brought a deep pain to Ari. He had spent a lot of time with the shy, delicate woman, and come to respect her despite the fact she wasn't a warrior. She had listened to him and taught him much in the short month that he had been captive. She had become a good friend, not just because Nigteagle had ordered her but because she truly cared for him.

Despite the fact that he desperately wanted news of Graysparrow he felt unease about Nigteagle's return. The unexpected declaration of love had stunned Ari, although he had tried his best to hide it. He had never

expected Nigteagle to say such words to him, even if he suspected that the man felt at least something for him. He was going against a lifetime of teaching as if it were nothing, yet Ari also noticed those words had only been spoken between them. Graysparrow's words of why Nigteagle had stayed away from him echoed in his mind.

Nigteagle might think that he loved Ari, but the man was shamed by his feelings. He also said he loved Ari but he knew that if Nigteagle truly did care for him then he would not take his freedom from him. Nigteagle knew what freedom meant to a warrior, and yet he took it from Ari. It couldn't be love to want to cage the person you cared about.

It had to end, and Ari knew only his sword could end it. They must fight, and he had

to win if there was to be anything between the two of them. He heard a rustling of the tent flap to see Nigteagle enter, his face pale, anguish in his eyes.

“Graysparrow?” Ari asked softly.

“She is still alive, but the women are unsure, only time will tell. The baby was stillborn,” Nigteagle said raggedly.

Ari rose from the ground and went to Nigteagle, wrapping his arms around the man as they sank to the ground. He felt hot tears on his shoulder as Nigteagle’s body shuddered against his own. Ari stroked the man’s back, feeling his pain deeply, unable to imagine the pain of losing a child.

He held the man for a long time as he

cried against his chest. When the tears had finally stopped he felt Nigteagle pull away from him, looking at the ground. Ari gently touched Nigteagle's face and leaned forward, kissing his forehead gently as his hands untied the leather jerkin. Nigteagle lifted his face to kiss Ari, which he avoided, gently moving his lips to Nigteagle's chest instead. He gently licked and kissed the man's exposed skin, and his hand found its way into Nigteagle's pants, stroking the soft member. He moved down the copper skin to lick the half erect manhood. Swirling his tongue around the soft head, he slid his hand over the length of the shaft, moving his hands to gently rub the man's balls as he engulfed Nigteagle totally.

Nigteagle whimpered and began to thrust his hips up into Ari's mouth as he pulled

off and looked up at Nigteagle. He stood and slowly shed his clothes as Nigteagle sat up. Ari shook his head and pushed the man down and straddled him, feeling the man's ridged organ pressing against him.

“You don't have to do this,” Nigteagle said softly.

“There is no shame in me giving myself you. There is no humiliation in pleasure freely given, Nigteagle,” Ari whispered as he guided the man into himself and gasped.

He felt Nigteagle's hands clutch at his hips as he moved. Arching back in pleasure he rocked on the man, feeling him repeatedly hit him in the right spot to make his manhood jump. Ari let the pleasure flow through him, doing nothing to control it as he cried out in lust, not

caring who heard them. He felt himself explode powerfully when Nigteagle touched him.

Looking down at his partner, he slid off the man and got to his knees, spreading his legs wide, leaning down. He saw Nigteagle hesitate even as his organ bobbed in front of him.

“Remember my words, Nigteagle,” Ari said gently as he spread himself, exposing his gapping entrance more fully to the man.

Nigteagle approached him, entering slowly and gently. Ari moved with him, enjoying the feeling of being connected to the man.

“Fuck me harder Nigteagle,” Ari gasped bucking back against the man.

“But....?” Nigteagle said confused.

Ari laughed, breathless at the man's confusion.

“You're forgetting, Nigteagle, I want it rough. I want you to dominate me. Make me feel you Nigteagle,” Ari gasped as the man pulled almost out and rammed himself in as Ari spoke.

“Yes,” Ari hissed.

Nigteagle plunged into him harder and harder, moving them across the floor with the power of his thrusts as Ari groaned, feeling his manhood awaken at the violent acquisition of his body. He heard Nigteagle growl fiercely as he slammed down into him, emptying himself into Ari as his own manhood spilled itself onto the ground.

Ari crumpled to the ground, gasping as Nigteagle pulled out of him and lay down next to him. They both lay quiet, regaining their breath as they stared at the ceiling.

“You still won’t let me kiss you?”
Nigteagle said quietly.

“I am your captive, not your lover
Nigteagle,” Ari said quietly.

“Tomorrow,” Nigteagle said in a
pained voice.

A huge crowd surround Ari and Nigteagle as they stood facing each other, their swords drawn. Ari could see the deep sadness in the man and was determined to change that

expression. He moved, circling Nigteagle, gauging the man. Nigteagle charged and Ari grinned, blocking.

The battle had just begun and Ari could feel the excitement of the contest of strength overpowering him. He attacked furiously, making Nigteagle growl in frustration as his expression lost its sadness and the thrill of the fight began to take hold. Each strike of the sword drew Nigteagle in as Ari wove complex patterns with his steel, pulling the man deeper into the fight.

As Ari had suspected, they were evenly matched as the battle dragged on, neither one of them giving way. The crowd had become silent in awe of the skill they were seeing as the blades blurred in their speed. Ari lost track of the time as they continued, knowing that the

reasons of freedom and love had faded to the overwhelming joy of battle that both of them felt.

Finally, Nigteagle got the advantage over him, his sword sinking into Ari's right arm as Ari grinned in delight, tossing his sword to his left hand and bringing it up under Nigteagle's guard, holding the side against Nigteagle's neck.

The crowd broke out in cheers and applause as Nigteagle looked at him in shock.

“You can fight with both hands?”

“Of course, I usually fight with two swords,” Ari said with a smile.

“But you only had one when you fought me before,” Nigteagle protested.

“I got one stuck in a man’s ribs and lost it,” Ari said with a shrug.

Suddenly the men were surrounding them, congratulating Ari and clapping Nigteagle on the back. Ari arched his brow, looking at Nigteagle, noticing no one was demanding he fuck the man. It was apparent that the warriors of the clan were stunned by the skills that they had witnessed from the both of them, and considered Nigteagle’s loss insignificant compared to the display they had both put on.

“You are free,” Nigteagle said over the noise of the crowd.

“Good,” Ari nodded, sheathing his sword, and he moved to face Nigteagle.

Grabbing the man’s face, he kissed him

deeply, pressing his body completely against the man as he heard many of those around him gasp in horror. Ari pulled away from Nigteagle as his gaze swept around the stunned faces.

“If anyone has anything to say about this, I suggest they draw their swords now. Any that don’t fall to me, I’m sure will fall to Nigteagle,” Ari said in a deadly voice. “If you doubt we are men, I will be more than happy to prove we are,” Ari added sharply.

The men around him held up their hands, shaking their heads as others grinned. Before long the crowd had dispersed as Nigteagle looked at Ari in surprise.

“You are staying?” Nigteagle asked shakily.

“Now that I’m a free man, the choice is mine. I choose to stay with you, as your equal, Nigteagle,” Ari replied seriously, looking at the man.

“Equal, does that mean you don’t want me to tie...” Nigteagle started as Ari pressed his finger to the man’s lips.

“I think that is more than your men need to know,” Ari said, glancing around at the milling people.

“As your equal, Nigteagle, that doesn’t mean we can’t enjoy other pleasures,” Ari smiled.

“Kiss me again,” Nigteagle demanded.

“What about your men?” Ari asked.

Nighteagle stepped forward and grasped Ari, pulling him to him, kissing him without hesitation.

“Tomorrow,” Ari agreed.