

"More seminal [than *Desire for Orders*], by volume."

— No name

Entertaining Possibilities

"A glorious orgy of titillation and tenderness, *Entertaining Possibilities* embraces situations I'd never have dreamed of and takes them to a staggering climax with a touching denouement. Worth reading for more than fifteen minutes at a time, even if you lack Basitin stamina."

— avwolf



second
edition

amenon

Dedication and copyright

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To avwolf; For his contributions to the fields of slash, botany, and slash botany. Seriously though, this wouldn't have been possible without you seven years ago, and this wouldn't have been possible without you now.

So blame him, basically.

And, of course, to Tom; For Twokinds.

I'm sorry.

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Entertaining Possibilities

Keith was following his tracks back to the tent, trying to step into his pawprints as much as possible. He hadn't bothered to redo his travel wrappings before stepping out, and the icy depressions felt preferable to the two inches of fresh snow that was already down. Not great, but preferable.

He was nearly there when he noticed another set of pawprints heading out into the sparse forest. He followed them with his eyes, but lost them in the snow and half-light. Farther than one goes to relieve themselves, at any rate.

He looked at the tent, the welcoming glow of the lantern within revealing a shape moving inside. That'd be Natani, then. Waiting for him. He felt a familiar surge of excitement, and had to stop himself from stepping forward.

He looked back at the tracks, heading out who-knows how far through the gloom and falling snow, and thought. He didn't know what the problem was. He wasn't even sure there *was* a problem; Natani certainly didn't seem to think so. If there was any chance of getting to the bottom of it, though, it had to be through talking to Zen alone.

With a sigh, he pulled the hood of his heavy robe up and set back out into the forest. You take the opportunities you can get.

He had no trouble keeping to the larger set of prints; Zen must not have been walking very fast. The quietly falling snow deadened sound, and the only things he could hear were his own breathing and his footsteps when he occasionally clipped the edge of the impressions he was following.

After a few minutes, the tracks veered towards a small copse of trees and seemed to disappear. He approached slowly, scanning the trees. "Hullo?"

"Keith?" Zen peeked out from behind one of the bigger trees, part of the way up the trunk. "What are you doing here?"

He was by the tree now. Zen was sitting on a low branch, his back to the trunk. Keith scratched his head through the hood. "How about you?" Stupid question, but it might break the ice.

Zen just cocked an eyebrow at him and didn't say anything.

“Er, yeah, sorry as always... Lovely weather we’re having?”

Zen sighed and rolled his eyes. “Yeah, *lovely*. We might be here for days, at this rate.”

Keith sat down at the base of the tree, pulling his feet into the hem of his robe and rubbing them through the fabric with his hands. He wrapped his tail around himself. It wasn’t too bad. He was almost comfortable.

He shrugged. “Well, we can afford weeks.” After a moment. “And if it’s true they can teleport us to the coast, that’s weeks again.”

Zen sighed. “True enough. No hurry.”

They sat there a moment in not-quite companionable silence. How to ask the question in a new way? “Zen...” He hesitated. “Why... why aren’t you making fun of me right now for sitting here?” He smiled to himself. “Or threatening me, for that matter? We used to get along, right? What happened?”

Zen was silent for a moment. Keith craned his neck to look at him, but couldn’t really see his expression. “Nothing happened. Just not in a funny mood, I guess. And I don’t think you need much threatening these days. You’re here because of Natani, right?”

Not untrue.

“And myself. You.”

“But Natani first, right?”

“Natani first.”, he agreed.

“Can’t very well fault you for that as the big brother, can I?”

Nothing for it. “Is...” Keith swallowed. “Is there something you *can* fault me for? Because that’s the only thing I can think of. That you don’t think I’m good for Natani, after all.”

And he’d hate it if that were the case. He didn’t think it was, but...

Zen sounded disgusted. “No! That’s not it at all.”

Meaning there was something it *was*.

Zen dropped out of the tree to stand next to him. He was in a lighter robe than Keith, and that mostly for modesty. The wolves’ winter coats were formidable. And adorable, though he didn’t usually let on that he thought that.

Zen looked at him for a moment, then scratched his head and sighed. He

sat down, cross-legged, and looked at Keith. Serious. “Okay, I guess I’ve never properly told you this. So I will. Because it’s just like your dumb self to worry about that of all possible things...”

He hadn’t been *that* worried. Just... a little.

“Look, you’re the best thing that ever happened to Natani. You’ve made him happier than I thought was even possible.” Zen sighed. “Happier than *he* thought was possible. He... after we were linked, he never once imagined he could be with someone. He just... wrote it off as impossible, never even gave it a thought.” The wolf barked a laugh. “I wanted to disagree, but... what was I going to say? That he was going to meet a nice basitin **boy**?” He laughed more genuinely now. “Man, that’d be a conversation. I’d love to know what he would have said. Called me insane, probably.” Zen smiled. “But he *did* meet a nice basitin boy, if a grumpy and gloomy one. You’re a miracle, Keith.” He sighed. “Hell, you’ve done better by my little brother than I have.”

Grumpy and gloomy? ... It wasn’t the least kind way Zen could have described what he’d been like. Keith felt warmer for both what he’d said and how he’d said it, but...

He looked at Zen imploringly. “Thank you, but then what’s *wrong*?”

Zen laughed at his expression and reached his hand into Keith’s hood to tousle his hair. The motion made his ears rub against the fabric of the hood, sending a shiver down his spine. Zen’s hand lingered a moment, and Keith welcomed both the gesture and the warmth. “It’s nothing for you to worry about. Now shoo, get in out of the cold. You’re shivering, and you’ve kept him waiting long enough.”

Keith bid him goodbye and made his way back towards the tent, more confused than he’d been. He turned Zen’s words over in his mind, committing them to memory.

Keith closed the tent flap behind him. It felt warmer inside than it should have; he suspected some magic had been expended for his benefit. Natani was sitting cross-legged on their bedding, a book in his lap. He was wearing a robe much like his brother’s.

Gods, but he was beautiful. When he turned to look at Keith, with a smile, Keith's tail made an involuntary swishing motion, betraying no secrets. He could no more have stopped the smile on his face. The wolf's tail mirrored the motion.

Natani rose to meet him, extending his hand. Keith took it, and let himself be pulled close. The large wolf's warmth enveloped him, and he was home.

"You're cold! How long were you out there? Get out of that robe."

Well, the robe *was* probably colder than he was. Keith pulled his tail through the tail-hole, then the entire garment over his head, being careful with his ears. He found that Natani had done the same, and was presenting him with the robe he'd been wearing.

Keith quirked an eyebrow at him, but took the robe and put it on. It was much too large for him; he quickly gave up trying to get his tail through the hole, and when he pulled one shoulder up, the other flopped off. The hem dragged the ground.

But it *was* warm, and had Natani's scent. He wouldn't have traded back, then and there.

Natani was covering his mouth with one hand. It did nothing to hide his amusement. "It... suits you."

But he sounded like he was only half joking, so Keith gathered up the hem and made a clumsy twirl, his balance hampered by his tail being trapped in the robe. He finished by giving Natani his best curtsy and a wink. "You like?"

Natani had the weirdest expression on his face. He cleared his throat. "Have you ever tried on a dress?"

Keith's mouth quirked. "I've been tempted. Haven't you?"

Natani burst out laughing at his cheekiness. "Well, there was that one time... it was pink. Very pink."

Oh?

"Pink?" Keith tilted his head and narrowed his eyes. "I think that's more my color."

Natani raised a hand to touch Keith's cheek, a slight smile on his face. Keith leaned in to the caress.

The wolf sounded thoughtful. "I'll have to remember that."

Had he gotten himself into something again? Well, no matter. After a moment of silence, Natani leaned down to kiss him. It was so tender it brought tears to Keith's eyes.

Natani wiped them away with a smile. "I love you, Keith."

It still struck him, sometimes. Natani was the miracle, not him.

He placed his hands on the wolf's shoulders. Natani obligingly lowered his head, and Keith put every bit of the love he felt into the returning kiss. It wasn't quick work.

He finally pulled back and let his hands fall from Natani's shoulders, sliding them down to the wolf's hips. "I love you, too."

Natani's expression... it's hard to reassure someone who needs no reassurance, but Keith thought he might have succeeded. Natani made a small sound and grabbed his shoulders, pulling him tightly to himself. Keith ended up with a faceful of breasts and mane.

Even with just the three of them, Natani went bound more often than not. Keith didn't really mind either way; the important thing was that when he chose to show, there was no shame in it for him. And if Keith sometimes had a part in the wrappings becoming accidentally undone in the heat of the moment, well, they really were rather nice breasts.

Keith wrapped his arms around Natani and returned the embrace, relishing the wolf's affection. The only thing between them was the coarse fabric of the robe he was wearing, and it provided an interesting tactile sensation as he rubbed against Natani. He felt his lust begin to rise.

Keith loosened his hold, signalling the wolf to afford him some freedom of movement. He began to trace the musculature of Natani's back with his hands. He could feel the slow movement of the wolf's tail, wagging, and realized his own was doing the same. He moved his hands to Natani's sides and kept them there, focusing instead on burying his face in the wolf's ample bosom. The sensation of his ears rubbing against Natani's breasts was something he didn't think he'd ever tire of; but Natani might, so he didn't overstay his welcome. He stood straighter and looked up, to find the wolf lowering his face for a kiss, right on cue. Keith kissed him more hungrily this time, speaking wordlessly of his need for his lover.

He'd expected Natani to respond to his kiss more aggressively, but he seemed receptive instead. The wolf was letting him take the lead. How long would he stay docile?

Keith stretched for all the height he could get and rubbed his hardness against Natani through the robe. The wolf broke the kiss to let out a small moan.

Keith moved his hands up Natani's sides, ruffling his winter coat, and eliciting a shiver from the wolf. He moved on to Natani's breasts, massaging them gently and teasing his nipples, all the while observing his reactions. When he saw the wolf's lips part slightly, he started making his way down Natani's body, first with his hands, then with his mouth. When he gave one nipple a friendly lick, he could feel Natani's stomach trembling against his touch. When he gave the other a playful nip, the trembling became what he knew to be the first tremors of a quake.

He moved lower still, going down to sit at the wolf's feet, bringing his face in line with his ultimate goal. The scent of Natani's arousal was almost overpowering.

He moved his hands down Natani's thighs, enjoying the feeling of the powerful muscles there trembling slightly under his fingers. He gave a nudge with his muzzle, and the wolf opened his legs wider.

For a moment, Keith felt fresh wonder at what he was doing. Their early days had been a huge song and dance of awkwardness and almost-moments... and the truth of it was, Keith would have been happy with that. That's what he had been expecting, given Natani's circumstances. But eventually the wolf had lost patience with himself—or maybe lost patience with Keith's patience—and decided to master his body.

And what Natani decides, goes.

Keith put his tongue to work in ways he had hardly dared dream of in those early days, lapping up the evidence of Natani's arousal and teasing his way closer to the source. The wolf shuddered under his attentions, shuddered more when he used his hands to guide Natani to his mouth.

He explored Natani carefully, staying in easy range of base camp with occasional farther forays. The wolf's moans were growing louder, and more frequent... but so was the trembling in his legs. Natani was still willing to let

him have his way, but this was no position to take his time in. He picked up his pace.

Natani was panting now, and Keith could tell that he was getting close... but also that his legs would give out first. He was a little disappointed that he couldn't fully capitalize on this opportunity at having the big wolf at his mercy, but needs must. Maybe in a chair? Something for later. Not letting up his assault, he found Natani's hands and guided them to his head.

Natani needed no further prompting to take control. He pulled Keith's head even tighter to himself and started moving his hips, pushing against him. The wolf ground out his pleasure on his face, and Keith focused on keeping his tongue busy and his teeth out of places they had no business being. Natani's panting became more desperate, which meant the moment was close—and it came. Keith drank deep from the source as the wolf made a series of longer thrusts with his hips, peaking with each. Four, five, six, seven... and when he thought it was done, an eight, accompanied by a hoarse gasp. Natani's knees buckled, and Keith guided him down as best he could, supporting him with his arms and catching his rump with his chest. They ended on the floor with not too much of a jolt, the wolf straddling his torso.

Keith gazed up at him. Natani was still panting, his eyes closed tightly. Keith reached up to caress the wolf's face, and smiled when Natani leaned into the gesture.

Finally the wolf opened his eyes, and let out a sigh. His voice was hoarse. "We should do that more often."

Keith grinned up at him. "How about right now? You could just scoot up a little..."

Natani laughed. "You..." he shook his head, and Keith let his hand fall back to his side. "No, I think that's quite enough of that. And..." Natani reached behind himself with one hand and found Keith's still erect member, brushing it through the fabric of the robe. "I think you're all warmed up."

He had forgotten cold existed.

The casual touch brought his own arousal back into focus, and he sighed happily as he concentrated on the sensations of Natani gently stroking him. "Y'know, you're going to get your robe dirty."

Natani was amused. “Am I? I suppose I’d better do something about that.”

The wolf rose off him and sat down by his side, inspecting the rather unmistakable tenting at his groin and massaging it again. He glanced back at Keith. “Is this the problem?” Natani took his hand away and nuzzled the bulge with his muzzle, inspecting it from all directions.

Keith moaned.

“Nope, all clean here. Maybe you didn’t wipe your feet? You might have gotten the hem dirty...”

Keith shivered with anticipation as Natani made his way down his legs.

“Let’s see...” The wolf traced the arches of Keith’s feet with his fingers, sending exquisite sensations up his spine. “Seems okay... but better take a closer look.” He nuzzled at Keith’s ankles and arches, all the while using his hands to play with the basitin’s pads.

Keith made a strangled sound.

“Well, better safe than sorry!” And with that, Natani spent a few glorious minutes carefully licking at his pads and teasing his toes. Keith gasped and quivered under his attentions.

Natani licked his lips and winked. “Yup, all clean.”

Keith sighed happily. Maybe the snow wasn’t so bad, after all.

Natani grabbed the hem of Keith’s robe and started rolling it up, and Keith wiggled helpfully to keep it from bunching up under him. When the wolf reached his groin, he stopped.

“Well, well. There seems to be a stain here after all.” There was, in fact, a rather notable wet spot on the fabric. Keith could only imagine the state of his member after Natani’s treatment.

“Sorry about that. Don’t know what came over me.”

Natani grinned at him. “Well, you can think about how you’ll make it up to me while I fix the leak.”

Natani started at his belly and slowly migrated south, licking his fur clean as he went. When the wolf reached his quivering manhood, Keith could feel every lick as that tongue slowly worked its way all around the base of his shaft, spending perhaps more time than was strictly necessary on his sack. Keith let out a happy sigh as Natani turned his attention on the

shaft itself, meticulously polishing it with his tongue until it must have shone. Finally, Natani engulfed his member up to the base in one smooth motion, and Keith groaned. He was already very close.

He thrust his hips lightly to make sure Natani understood. The wolf came up to the tip to give him a wink, then slowly made his way back to the base and held still. Natani began to gently massage Keith's sack with his fingers. The wolf was barely moving his head, but his tongue was relentless.

Keith could feel his balls tighten under Natani's touch, and his world turned into pleasure and release. His hips convulsed as the orgasm wracked his body, his member releasing jet after jet into the wolf's ready mouth. He could dimly feel the movements of Natani swallowing.

His body relaxed with a sigh, and the moment was over. He could feel Natani swallowing again, and then had to keep from squirming as the wolf licked the length of his now-sensitive member clean. This done, Natani popped back into his field of view, licking his lips.

"So?"

Keith smiled at him. "I think it's my turn to do the laundry anyway."

Natani quirked an eyebrow at him. "Enough 'dirty talk'?"

Keith snickered. "Come here," he bid, and the wolf obliged, bringing his face close for a kiss. There was shared humour in it, and satisfaction, but those weren't all. Not breaking the kiss, Keith raised his hands to Natani's breasts, teasing his nipples slowly. The undertones of hunger became more pronounced. The kiss went on, and he kept stoking Natani's flames. The wolf's hunger grew, the undertones becoming overtones, and Keith could feel himself begin to get firm again in response.

He slid his hands down Natani's sides, and when he couldn't quite reach, Natani shifted himself up along Keith's body and arched his back to bring his hindquarters in reach. Keith gave his backside a friendly squeeze and tugged at the base of his slowly wagging tail.

He moved his hands to the wolf's belly, briefly teasing out the shape of the muscles there. He returned one hand to Natani's breasts, then sent the other one to feel the wolf's wetness and tease at his most sensitive place.

The kiss was pure love and lust, now. Keith took his hand from between Natani's legs, intending to pull the wolf to him, but Natani dropped his hips

himself as soon as the hand was clear. Keith shivered as the wolf's stomach rubbed against his hard member. Natani began grinding against him, and Keith began slowly moving his own hips, grinding back. He grabbed at Natani's hips to pull him tighter against himself, earning a grunt from the wolf.

After a few more moments of tantalizing friction, Natani began making bigger movements. Guessing at his purpose, Keith stopped moving and loosened his hold to give the wolf more freedom. Natani positioned his hips and pushed down, only to have Keith's manhood slip away. Once. Twice. Three times.

Frustration entered into the kiss. Four. Five.

Natani broke the kiss and levered himself off his elbows onto straight arms. The wolf looked down at him crossly. "Oh dammit, just put it in already!"

Keith grinned, and used one hand to steady his member. He rubbed the tip against Natani's opening, and the wolf's expression softened. Natani pushed down again, slowly, and Keith held himself steady as Natani's tight wetness enveloped his manhood, inch by inch, until finally he was in all the way to the base. It was a snug fit.

Natani held still a while, and Keith took in the sights and the sensations. The wolf's weight on him, the hot, sensuous slickness surrounding his member. Natani looking down at him with evident satisfaction, his falling hair framing his face. Absolutely beautiful.

Natani began moving, slowly at first, gyrating his hips. The feeling was exquisite. The wolf began to raise his hips, ever so slightly, before bringing them down again, and Keith watched as his expression turned into one of pleasure.

Natani pulled himself up straight, freeing his hands from supporting himself and putting them to better use. He grabbed his breasts, being rather rougher with them than Keith would have had the heart for.

Most of Natani out of reach to him, Keith settled his hands on the wolf's hips, adding a bit of his strength to the downward motions.

Slowly, slowly, the movements sped up until Natani was riding him with reckless abandon, panting. Keith began straining against him when he

slammed down, lending some of his own growing desperation to the movements, eliciting moans from the wolf.

Natani let his hands fall to their joining, and expertly pushed himself over the edge. He threw his head back and let out a long, low moan, and Keith felt the wolf shudder to the core for a long moment as his pleasure took him.

Keith had been getting close, but not close enough to follow Natani past the point of no return. He took his joy in the wolf's pleasure, instead, and waited for Natani to make his way back to him.

Eventually, the wolf relaxed and let out a long sigh. He leaned forward on his arms and looked down at Keith, a goofy smile on his face. Keith returned the smile and levered his upper body off the floor to try and reach him with a kiss. They made it work. Breaking the kiss with a grin, Keith waggled his eyebrows at Natani questioningly and gave his hips a thrust to drive the point home.

Natani laughed, and collapsed on top of him, bringing him back down to the floor and giving him another faceful of breasts. A neat bit of full-body co-ordination later, they had managed to roll themselves over with Keith still inside.

He propped himself up on his arms and found his position. He knew he was still close, so he began making long, slow, steady strokes to prolong his pleasure. Natani murmured something, inaudible, and placed his hands on Keith's neck, stroking his cheeks. Keith turned his head to kiss the palm of the wolf's hand.

Sometimes, Keith wished he was a little taller. He would have dearly liked to be able to reach Natani's mouth, instead.

... then again, it worked out fine when he was on the receiving end. He smiled into Natani's palm and gave it another kiss, and shook his head at himself. You take things as they are.

His pleasure built up, he switched to a faster, shorter stroke. As he made his slow approach to the edge, he looked at Natani, smiling back at him. He couldn't imagine what the look on his own face was, but the wolf seemed to enjoy it, at least.

When he began to thrust erratically, Natani wrapped his legs around

him and pulled him in. With a jerk, he thrust one last time, deep, bottoming out. The wolf pulled Keith's head tight to his bosom and held him close, and he was gone, lost in the throes of spending himself deep inside his lover.

*

Keith was still lying on top of him, head snug against his breasts, practically purring. Natani stroked the basitin's ears idly, not in any particular hurry to be doing anything else. Seeing Keith happy was something he never got tired of.

After a while, Keith let out a contented sigh. "Round three?"

Natani laughed. Not an impossible thought... "Not satisfied?", he asked, giving one of the basitin's ears a tweak.

Keith wriggled. "Satisfied. And satiated. For the moment."

He was impossible. Natani smiled to himself.

They lay there a moment longer, but Keith stirred much sooner than he'd have expected. The basitin rolled off him and scooted up his side to put their faces next to each other. Natani rolled to his side to look at him, curious.

"Actually... there's something I wanted to talk to you about."

Keith looked serious, so Natani booped him on the nose. He rolled his eyes.

"It's Zen. There really is something up with him."

Natani was surprised. Keith had asked him if he thought there was, and he'd said no. Would still have said no after thinking about it. But if Keith was sure, he'd have a good reason.

"What is it?"

Keith frowned. "He wouldn't tell me, but he indirectly admitted there was something. So now I have no idea."

"When did you talk to him?"

"Oh, just before I came here. We talked for maybe five minutes."

That was a little odd. He had the link walled off, now, but he'd only done that after Keith came back. He'd have expected a courtesy call... but then, maybe Zen simply hadn't thought of it.

Keith was silent a moment, then continued with some difficulty. "I

thought maybe he'd changed his mind about us. I didn't really think that was it, but... it was the only thing I could think of." He shook his head. "But that's definitely not it." The basitin cleared his throat. "He... called me a miracle."

Natani smiled at Keith. This was too good. "Miracle, huh? I've used that word before."

Keith blushed beautifully. Natani never did get tired of seeing him happy.

But his thoughts quickly turned back to the matter at hand. "Tell me what he said, and how he said it."

The cool air felt wonderful on Natani's body. He'd left Keith with his robe—he looked adorable in it—and come out naked for the chance to cool off a little after all that exercise. Sometimes, his winter coat got to be a little much.

It was full dark, now, but light enough for his night vision to make his way around, especially with all the snow. There was a good three inches of it, and it was still coming down in large quiet flakes. He followed the faint tracks, crashing through the snow alongside them at his usual gait.

He turned the problem around in his head a few times as he went, but there really was only the one solution. He hadn't told Keith, but he was sure. That the basitin hadn't seen it... he sighed to himself. He shook his head, wonderingly. There were still answers he needed before he'd know what to make of it.

He slowed down and went quietly as he approached his destination. The tracks veering off at an angle, the copse of trees... this had to be the place.

He addressed the biggest tree around and kept his tone neutral. "You have a thing for Keith."

Zen fell out of the tree with a crash.

Natani unwall'd the link at his end. Zen was bewildered, but none the worse for wear for his tumble. Natani leaned his shoulder against the tree, arms crossed, and waited to see what his brother would do.

Zen cursed with feeling, got up, dusted himself off, and sighed. He glanced at Natani, only to half turn away. Wary. It was darker in the copse,

and Natani couldn't really make his face out that well—but he didn't need to. The link could serve as well as expressions could.

Zen's answer was a single word. "Yes."

Natani let some amusement show. "So you want to... how did it go? 'Feel his short, sandy fur against you?'"

Zen looked at him, clearly exasperated. "Yes! Yes, I do. And it was 'warm', not 'short.'"

Natani smiled at his brother. "It's both. But..." he let his concern show. "Is it the link? Is that why you didn't say anything?"

Zen was surprised. "No, it's got nothing to do with the link." He scratched his head. "Egh. No, of course it's got *something* to do with the link. But no, these are *my* feelings."

Good. "Show me?"

Zen looked at him for a long moment. Disbelief. This was beyond personal, even for them. Eventually, resignation. Zen thought Natani was within his rights. A curious reason to agree.

Zen put more of his feelings into the link. It wasn't Natani's place to put words to it, but it was definitely love. And it was definitely different from his feelings for Keith.

His heart went out to his brother. He understood that longing. "Why didn't you say anything?"

Zen shook his head. "What was I going to say?"

Natani smiled. "I love him too' seems appropriate."

"And then what?"

Natani shrugged. "I don't know! We're about to find out, though. You have to tell him."

Zen was incredulous. "Why? What's he going to do, feel bad for me?"

Natani grinned. "Beats me. But if I know him at all, he'll try to do *something*. And he already feels bad for you, he just doesn't know why." He shook his head and went on. "He was looking at you more clearly than I was, brother. I should have used my eyes and not the link." How to get to the heart of the matter? "Look. I know you're looking out for me, and I appreciate that, but... you don't need to protect me from you. Or Keith. Or myself. If you're miserable, I need to know about it."

And he showed Zen *his* feelings for Keith. It was only fair. Love flooded the link, love with a core of absolute, unshakeable trust. Zen sat down sharply, and Natani reined his emotions in.

His brother swallowed and shook his head. His voice was shaky. “Gods. I never imagined...” He sighed. “I can see why you’re not worried, at least.”

Natani smiled at him. “You’ll tell him how you feel?”

Zen shrugged. “Little point in hiding it now.” He sighed. “Little point hiding it in the first place, I guess. Maybe getting shot down will help.”

Natani kept his suspicions to himself. “Maybe. I’m going to send him out here, so just...” He looked around, reconsidering. “Actually, let’s get back to the camp.”

Natani set off, and Zen followed.

*

Zen was fidgeting. Natani had planted him within eyesight of the tent and went in, and he’d gravitated to the nearest tree.

What was going on in there? What were they talking about? Why was it taking this long? How was he preparing Keith? There were no answers in the link.

He sighed and rubbed at the bump on his head. It had been a while since he’d fallen out of a tree. Natani had been... calm. He’d commiserated, and even been a little amused. He certainly hadn’t been worried in the least. And why would he have been? Even if Zen could somehow steal Keith away from his brother—laughable as that idea was, it had crossed his mind—he’d have sooner killed himself than done that to Natani. Killed Keith for letting him do it, too, while he was at it. He hated that he felt this way. Nothing good could come of it. But he couldn’t let go of his feelings. He knew; he’d tried.

Keith finally emerged from the tent and started making his way in Zen’s general direction. He was carrying the lantern, and wearing...

“... is that Natani’s robe?”

Keith was holding the hem bunched up in one hand to keep it off the ground. The basitin’s voice was dry. “He seems to think I look adorable in it.”

He did. Poker face. “And you...?”

Keith narrowed his eyes at him, then smiled. “I suspect he might be right.”

The basitin hooked the lantern up on a likely branch and stood, waiting, looking up at him. He was clearly curious to find out what he was doing out here. Zen sighed. Nothing for it. He forced the words out. “Look, I like you.”

Keith looked at him for a moment, then tilted his head. “And? I like you too.”

Zen had to look away. “No, you idiot, I *like* you like you.”

“Oh. Oh! Oooooooooooh.”

He cursed himself for his cowardice, but couldn't bring himself to look back at Keith. After a long moment of waiting for the axe to fall, he was startled to feel the basitin's hand on his face, turning his head, bidding Zen to look at him. Keith had a small smile on his face. “Isn't this where you're supposed to kiss me?”

Zen's heart went in his throat. It made speaking difficult. “I... I couldn't.”

Keith seemed to consider for a moment. “Then how about a hug?”

Zen was torn.

“It's a little chilly out here, you see, and—”

He grabbed Keith and pulled him to his chest. The basitin felt plenty warm to him. Keith laughed, and wrapped his arms around Zen, and he had no idea what to feel, anymore. “Why... why are you being like this?”

“What was I going to say? That you're not my type?”

He hadn't really thought about that. “That you're *taken*, if nothing else. Y'know, nice guy, name of Natani, maybe you've met, happens to be your *brother*?”

Keith laughed again. “You have no idea how good it feels that you're making fun of me again.” The basitin leaned back and looked up at him. He still had that small smile on his face. “You know what Natani said?”

Zen shook his head. “He just told me to tell you.”

“He said, ‘please try to find a way.’”

Zen was speechless. “But, it's...”

There was humour in Keith's eyes, but there was steel, too. “Impossible? Unthinkable?”

That gave him pause. “But... how would it work? How *could* it work?”

Keith nodded at him approvingly. “That’s a much better question.”

Suddenly, hope. “So you’re really thinking about it?”

Keith raised his eyebrows. “Natani said *please* and *try* in the same sentence. I half expected to hear you were dying of something.”

Zen chuckled. “It feels a little like I am, sometimes.”

Keith rolled his eyes at him. “So kiss me already, you idiot. I can’t figure this out if you don’t.”

Zen’s chest constricted. He’d... he hadn’t even dreamt of this. Keith was looking up at him, expectantly. He took one arm from around the basin to caress his cheek for a moment, then leaned in.

It had never felt like this before, and it wasn’t just because he’d never kissed a basin. He held back, didn’t dare reveal himself completely, but he let some of his lonely, longing, desperation show. Keith was receptive, feeling him out.

Zen broke the kiss and straightened up. Keith swallowed. His voice was a little shaky. “You make a good argument.”

There were tears in his eyes. Zen was aghast. “You should have stopped me!”

Keith shook his head. “No, no, no! It’s not that.” He wiped the tears away and smiled at him, somewhat shakily. “It was just... you reminded me of something.” He sighed and seemed to collect himself. “Now get back down here so I can kiss you back.”

Zen obliged him. Keith’s return kiss was gentle and compassionate, with maybe just a hint of something stronger. To his great embarrassment, Zen could feel his body react to that hint.

To his even greater embarrassment, Keith hugged him and found the evidence.

“O-ho!” Keith grinned at him. “I think that answers a follow-up question I might have had.”

Zen blushed. “It’s ridiculous! I’m not exactly young anymore, but just a kiss from you and...”

He trailed off. Keith’s grin had faded. “Not young, huh?”

Of course. “Come on! You’ve got **years** left with Natani.”

The basitin's ears drooped. "Years, huh?"

He pulled Keith into a tight embrace, and the basitin sighed happily. That *had* to have been more deliberate than not. Zen sighed, and let go. "How does my brother keep his hands off you when you do that?"

Keith gave him that half-smile of his. His ears perked up. "Um, he mostly doesn't."

Of course. Zen laughed, and then marvelled that he was laughing. Keith's kiss had really lifted his spirits.

Among other things.

He shook his head. "So what do you think now?" He smiled suggestively. "Or do you need more kisses? A massage? Maybe a footrub?"

Keith had the strangest expression on his face. "That... was a lot less funny than you think. But I think I can find my way now." He grew serious. "I think all three of us want all three of us to be happy. I think there has to be a way, because it would be too sad if there wasn't." He smiled. "I think that's what Natani thinks as well." He hesitated. "And I think there are people I should have done better by, and I don't want you to be one of them."

Zen smiled at him and shook his head. "I don't think you need to worry about that last one. So, what now?"

"What else? Now, we talk to Natani."

They made their way to the tent through the fresh snow, side by side.

Natani was SLEEPING. Zen sighed.

"There's 'unconcerned at having just sent his lover on an assignation', and then there's **this**."

Keith laughed, and sat down next to Natani. "Maybe make some coffee? This might be a late night."

"Some coffee, coming right up."

Zen grabbed his gear and traipsed outside to make the preparations. It gave him some time to think about this sudden swerve his life was taking. He wondered what Keith had in mind, or if there even was anything in particular. What the basitin had said, about Natani wishing there was a way, had rung true. Maybe that's all it was. But if so, that went for all three of

them... and that added up to hope.

He wondered about Keith's reaction to his kiss, too. He'd like to ask him about that, some day... Zen shook his head. Some day. Hope. How would it work? He thought about how he felt, when he saw Keith and Natani together, and tried to make sense of it. Could something like that be shared? What would it be like for Natani, if he was like that with Keith?

His throat went dry at the thought. Him and Keith, like Natani and Keith. That was surely too much, even for hope. Maybe it was because of his peculiar circumstances, but he didn't think he'd ever seen a pair like them. So no, surely not like that. But some other way. Maybe that was the key...

He poured the coffee into the three cups. That was what his kit made, three cups. Used to be he'd had a kit that made two cups.

He shook his head at himself and returned to the tent. More coffee, less philosophy.

Keith was still sitting where he'd left him, looking at the sleeping Natani with a smile. The basitin looked up as he entered, and Zen handed him a cup. He held another a strategic distance from Natani's nose.

Natani opened one eye. "Buh?"

"Coffee's up."

His brother let out a huge yawn and sat up, stretching, before accepting the cup and taking a sip.

Natani looked from Keith to him, then back, and raised his eyebrows. "So, what have the two of you been up to?"

Zen had no idea what to say.

Keith shrugged. "Oh, you know. Talked a bit. Made out a bit."

"That's all?" Natani actually sounded disappointed. Zen choked on his coffee.

Keith shook his head and smiled. "I need to decide before I act."

"Ah." Natani smiled, and took another sip of his coffee. "So, what do you need, to decide to act?"

Keith returned the smile, then looked at both of them in turn, serious. "Firstly, I need the two of you to be perfectly honest with each other about what you're feeling right now."

"The link?"

Keith nodded. “I don’t claim to understand how it works, but for Zen to have been keeping this to himself... I want none of that right now. I need both of you to know the score, and one of you to tell me.”

And just like that, they were both in the link, deeply enough that they couldn’t hide anything immediate without the other noticing. They looked at each other, inside and out.

Natani spoke first. “He’s hopeful and curious.” He smiled, and stage-whispered to Keith. “And a bit horny.”

Zen blushed. “And my esteemed brother is *amused* and curious. Looks like you have us both wondering.”

Keith nodded judiciously. “Secondly, I need Zen to finish his coffee.”

As if to emphasize the point, the basitin downed the rest of his own cup and put it down. Curious, Zen followed suit. As he was putting his cup down, he realized that Natani’s curiosity had vanished; he was all amusement now. Whatever was about to happen, he knew.

Zen put his cup down, and Keith pounced him. The basitin’s tackle carried him to the ground and Keith straddled him, leaning down to kiss him. It felt a little staged to him, after the one earlier, but there was real heat in it as well. Somehow, he had enough presence of mind to keep an eye on Natani’s reaction.

... which was to egg him on. *Roll him over and give him some payback!*

A compelling thought. Zen threw the basitin, pinning him under himself. He returned the heat in his kiss, and then some. Keith trembled under him; it made his lust rise higher. He was painfully aware of his erection, rubbing against the basitin’s thigh. With some difficulty, he summoned enough self-control to break the kiss and roll off.

Keith looked a little dazed, and Zen noticed—with considerable satisfaction—that the basitin’s robe was tenting. Natani was radiating approval.

Keith cleared his throat, still flat on his back. “Well. Anybody care to tell me what we just learned?”

Natani laughed. “Well, I might be crazy, but I think he likes you. But...” he grew more serious. “He was holding back. He’s terrified of hurting you.”

Keith turned his head to look at Zen, and gave him a reassuring smile and a pat on the leg. “S’okay. I’m pretty tough.”

Zen just nodded. He wasn't going to get into this, not right now.

Natani continued. "And now he's hiding *why* he's so terrified of hurting you."

Zen sighed. "Please don't pry. It's... not relevant."

Keith looked at Natani, who nodded. He'd been telling the truth. Keith sat up, and looked back at Zen. "And Natani?"

He was grateful they'd dropped it. "He *enjoyed* that. That little maneuver was his suggestion."

Keith grinned at him. "Well, thumbs up for execution. And now, if Natani is done with his coffee..."

Natani was. Keith crossed the short distance over to him on all fours, a sight that Zen found somewhat distracting.

After a moment, Keith's voice. "Well?"

Natani answered, amused. "I think he was staring at your ass so hard he may have missed the kiss entirely."

He blushed. Keith laughed. "Zen! Eyes front!" And the basitin kissed Natani again, with considerable enthusiasm. Zen set Natani's elation aside and focused on his own feelings in the link. Curiously, the familiar pang of jealousy was nowhere to be seen.

After they finished, Natani looked at him thoughtfully. "He *expected* it to hurt, but it didn't."

Zen cleared his throat, and looked for the explanation. "I think... I think it's because I'm a *part* of it, somehow. I feel like I... belong, here, now."

Natani and Keith looked at each other.

"Sound about right?"

"Sounds about right."

Keith looked at the both of them, mock-serious. "And it's the full and honest opinion of the *both* of you that *the other* is okay with this?"

They nodded in unison.

Keith sat down, cross-legged, an equal distance from both of them, gathering his hems to let his tail out. "Then I'm okay with this as well, but I have a condition." He rubbed at his ear. "The first time I'm with Zen—" he smiled "—which I suspect might not be far off—Natani should be there." He cleared his throat. "Well, considering the events just now... there might be less call

for privacy in general in the future.”

Not an issue for either of them. Easily enough done. The brothers nodded their assent.

Keith sounded a little strained. “That was the condition. I also have a... request.”

Natani was mirroring Zen’s curiosity. His brother didn’t know what this was, either. Keith hesitated for a long moment, looking at both of them.

“I... I realize I don’t know what I’m asking. But...” he blushed, and forced the words out. “I’d like Natani to be my first.”

Several things happened at once. They were both confused, then shocked when they realized what Keith meant. Zen stayed at shocked, but Natani flashed to hurt, then outrage, then laughing uproariously all in the space of a second.

Keith looked at Natani, rolling on the floor in the throes of mirth, then raised his eyebrows at Zen. Zen shook his head. “I couldn’t follow it. He was shocked, then hurt, then angry, and then... this.”

There was a flicker of something in Keith’s eyes when he registered the word ‘hurt’. Zen wondered if he should have left that part out.

His brother signalled reassurance. *It’s fine. He’d prefer the honesty.*

Natani lay on the floor, gasping. “Oh, Keith...” Another burst of laughter, and he continued. “You may not know what you’re asking, but you know exactly *why* you’re asking it.”

Keith smiled at him innocently. “I’m sure I have no idea what you might mean.”

Zen was still reeling. This was completely unthinkable, and surely Keith had to know that. *Is he for real?*

He is, and he isn’t. He probably isn’t expecting us to grant it.

Zen was perplexed. *So he doesn’t even want it?*

Natani shook his head. *No, he does. But he already got something by asking.*

*Clearly. What was **that** about?*

His brother grinned. *Oh, just settling a very old argument. Again. He doesn’t let winning stop him.* Natani could see that he didn’t get it. *I used to accuse him of only liking me because of my body. I just got angry at him*

for loving me **despite** of it. Tender love for the basitin. *He finds a way.*

Zen suddenly realized something. *You're actually willing to do it.*

Natani just nodded. *Yes.*

He was taken aback. *You're sure you...* He hesitated. This was something they *never* addressed directly.

Natani understood. *Brother, close your eyes and look at me. Really look.*

He did. Ignoring all the mental shorthand, all that was learned and remembered, all that he thought he knew, he looked at Natani as his brother truly appeared to him in the link at that moment. It was an exact match of his physical body. He was amazed. ... *what does it mean?*

Natani shrugged and smiled. *Nothing. And everything. Brother, I'm fine with my body. I think that lets me be fine with yours, too, if we decide to do this.* Natani was thoughtful. *He wouldn't ask this lightly, so he must have reasons beyond the obvious. And, it really is a rather sweet gesture to me.* Natani looked at him. *But, not so much to you, I think. Even if you grant it, he'll feel bad about asking.*

Zen hesitated. *He'd regret it?*

Natani smiled at him warmly. *Not unless one of us did.* He raised his eyebrows suggestively. *But he'd want to make it right.*

Now there was a thought. Zen swallowed and looked away. Natani laughed gently. *Not that you'd need that crutch. But you might like it.* Pause. **He** probably would.

Bluh. Zen shook his head to dislodge the mental images and sighed. *I take it you're more than just willing?*

Just teasing my brother. But yes, I would choose it. I'm curious. But I won't ask.

Because if you did, I'd agree.

Natani nodded. *You go too far for me.*

A simple statement of fact.

Zen considered.

It was unthinkable.

He thought about it. Either one of them could have convinced him so easily. Natani, with a word. Keith, with a touch. He smiled wryly to himself.

A look, probably. Well, and where was the harm? What would it lose him, really? He wasn't thrilled about the idea, but all his serious objections were mooted by Natani being in favor. Two votes yes, one abstain?

He opened his eyes to look at the two of them. Natani was sitting with his eyes closed, pretending to be considering. Zen understood why; he was planning on doing the turning down, so Zen wouldn't need to. As for Keith, he had his hands in his lap and was idly playing with the tip of his tail, not looking at either of them.

Natani opened one eye to peek at Keith, then opened the other and looked at the basitin with such love and amusement that it took Zen's breath away. He shared Natani's understanding; Keith was making any ruse of theirs unnecessary, on purpose.

Something clicked inside of him.

"Yes."

They looked at him, startled. He looked back with a smile. "Yes. Three votes yes." He shrugged. "Hey, should be interesting."

It actually took some doing. Borrowing one another's bodies was something they did at need; not common, but easily enough done and a natural extension of sharing their senses. Them both doing it at the *same* time required some fairly intricate mental convolutions, and they couldn't get comfortable with it unless they left the link rather wide open.

Natani groaned. "First, stand behind each other..."

That was a good way to put it.

Zen sat back up, only to feel like he wasn't *quite* sitting up straight. He shared a look with Natani, who was slightly crouched over. They smirked at each other and settled into more natural positions.

He stretched exploratorily, only to become acutely aware of his altered center of mass. Embarrassed, he crossed his arms and wrapped his tail around himself. Being in this body wasn't a new experience. Being in it naked and unbound...

He realized that Keith was looking at him with the weirdest expression. Hm? He cocked his head at the basitin, curious.

Keith and Natani shared a look. Natani nodded, and the basitin turned back to Zen. Keith approached slowly, almost as if not to spook him, then knelt down in front of him, not quite touching. He had one of the gentlest smiles Zen had ever seen. The basitin leaned in to kiss him, still not touching any other part of his body, equally gently.

He responded in kind. Not having the equipment to do what he *actually* wanted to do took the edge off, and he was able to express some of the subtleties of what he felt for Keith. The why instead of the what. The kiss turned playful, and they went back and forth for a long time, appreciating each other. He could feel his tail wagging slowly of its own volition.

When they finally broke it off, they sat for a while just looking at each other with silly smiles on their faces.

He'd have to remember that feeling.

Keith raised an eyebrow at him, somehow making it the most suggestive gesture he had ever seen. He shook his head and laughed. "Thanks for that, but this was about my brother, remember?"

Keith signalled mock(?)-disappointment with his ears, and returned to Natani. "I got shot down."

Natani quirked a smile. "Well, maybe I can console you."

They kissed, and Zen marvelled at their familiarity with each other. You'd have thought the different body would have mattered, but it was like they didn't even notice.

Then again, maybe not. Keith sat back on his haunches and grinned up at Natani. "Okay, let's see you."

Natani stood up to disrobe. Not being particularly interested in his own body, Zen watched Keith's reactions instead. The basitin seemed appreciative. Zen followed his train of thought past its station, and became rather distracted with thoughts of a female Keith. Did Natani know any transformation magic?

He's resistant.

... and you KNOW THIS?

Zen couldn't decide if he was serious. Laughter echoed in the link.

You could probably get him to wear a dress if you tried, though. Pink would be the colour.

Zen's brain shut down for a moment. *Is there anything you **haven't** gotten up to?*

Satisfaction. *There's always something new, brother.*

Natani was standing with his hands on his hips, looking back down at Keith. "You too. I think my brother needs something to look at to keep his mind from wandering."

Keith shot him a curious glance, and he blushed, but definitely did not look away as the basitin stood. Keith pulled the oversized robe over his head slowly, and Zen's eyes scoured every inch of his body as it was revealed.

Some inches more than once.

After the robe fell to the floor, Keith noted his expression and gave him a wink, followed by a little twirl to show off his body. Zen sighed happily.

He's... No. He cleared his throat instead of his mind, and smiled at the basitin. "You're beautiful."

Keith gave him a bashful grin and nodded his head toward Natani. "You too." He turned to Natani. "And you."

The basitin put his hands on Natani's chest, letting his fingers sink into his thick winter coat. Through the link, Zen was aware of the physical sensations of his body. Keith was tracing his contours and the shape of his muscles. Zen shivered at the ghost sensations. He could tell that Natani was taking it in as well; he'd probably never been *this* aware of Zen's body.

Keith slowly went down to his knees in front of Natani, and Zen was puzzled that, for a moment, his brother felt weak at the knees.

Amusement. *Just a memory of 'something new.'*

Zen would probably have been done for at this point, but to his surprise Natani wasn't even hard.

His brother was sardonic. *I'm sure you've had a lot of practice with it.*

Well. *No comment.*

Zen realized that *Keith* was hard now, and felt obscurely glad that the basitin could have that reaction to just touching his body. Surely that couldn't be *just* because of Natani. A combat-ready basitin was a new sight for him; the shape was unfamiliar but not unappealing, and the size seemed just about right...

Natani raised a mental eyebrow at him. *Good eye, brother.*

He made a hint of a nod. *You too, brother.*

Keith pressed his nose against Natani's lower abdomen and made his way downwards, nuzzling his member. Taking in the scents? The sensations coming through the link were impossible. Zen felt strangely frustrated at his body's lack of reaction.

Natani cleared his throat theatrically. "My brother insists that this has never happened before."

Zen rolled his eyes. Keith chuckled, but did not interrupt what he was doing. He slowly made his way down to Natani's sack.

Natani yelped. "Nope! Nope nope nope."

Keith looked up at him curiously.

"Too weird. Let's just leave those alone, okay?"

Zen cleared his throat. "Does not go for me, by the way."

Natani snorted. Keith laughed. "Noted. And..." he gave Zen a sideways glance that made his insides heat up. "... noted."

Keith gave the head an experimental lick, and Natani shuddered. The basitin took the tip into his mouth and began to massage the underside with his tongue. The mere echoes of the sensation made Zen whimper. He could feel his brother's mind racing faster than he could keep up with, and then, suddenly, clarity.

Natani surged to full hardness in a matter of heartbeats. Keith backed off and looked at it. He swallowed audibly. "Well, it's bigger than that toy of yours."

What.

Natani looked at Keith, and his answer to Zen was distracted. *Just a gift from someone with a surprising amount of foresight.*

Natani tweaked one of Keith's ears and gave him a grin. "Think you can handle it?"

Keith grinned back. "Not sure. I'll have to take a closer look."

Keith kissed the tip, then slowly traced the length of the shaft with his tongue and mouth. He came to rest against the knot. He poked it with his nose and looked at Natani, a little breathless. "Is this thing supposed to fit?"

Natani quirked an eyebrow and looked at Zen. "I'm not the owner."

Zen cleared his throat. "It's not unheard of. It's... nice... if it happens."

Keith gave the knot a kiss. “Understatement?”

Understatement.

Natani laughed. “Understatement.”

Keith swallowed again and shook his head. “Well, I expect we’ll find out...”

Zen looked away, torn.

Natani was thoughtful. *That’s for you to find out, I think, brother.*

He didn’t know what to feel. *But...*

His brother was firm. *It’s for you.* Zen let his gratitude show. Natani continued. *I will not pry. But we will talk one day, I think, about this thing with all the jagged edges that you hold so close to your heart.*

He sent grudging assent. *One day.*

*But not a far away day, if it keeps hurting you. And if it keeps connecting to Keith, I **will** pry.*

... *yes.*

Meanwhile, Keith had slowly teased his way back to the business end of Natani’s business end. “Oh?” The basitin shot Natani a glance. “You seem to have sprung a leak.”

Natani let out a long sigh. “How careless of me.”

“Well, it would be a pity to let it go to waste...”

And Keith slowly, carefully licked Natani’s member clean. Both wolves trembled with it.

Keith sat back on his haunches, seemingly considering the territory he’d been familiarizing himself with. Natani poked him on the nose with it. Keith laughed.

His brother tousled the basitin’s hair. “Well, what do you think?”

Keith smacked his lips. “Refined. Fine bouquet. Good mouthfeel.”

Natani tweaked his ear again. Keith grinned. “Well, it doesn’t taste like strawberries. But I think I could get used to it. In fact...” and he opened his mouth, engulfing as much of Natani’s member as he could. He could handle the girth—with no teeth, to Zen’s relief—but not the length. He gagged, backed off, and started exploring his limits.

The urge hit Natani hard, and he thrust his hips forward, gagging Keith again.

Keith sputtered, then laughed. “Dammit, Natani, I don’t have your muzzle! Now lay down and let me get the hang of this.”

Natani gave him a kiss on the way down. “Sorry about that. Didn’t expect it.”

Keith narrowed his eyes in response. “A likely story. Now lie down! Hands behind your head! Ass on the ground at all times.”

Natani laughed, and did as he was bid. Keith leaned over him and shot him a quick smile before going back to work. The basitin went slower this time, taking just the head into his mouth.

Zen had tried to shut the sensations out. He should have been able to. Would have been able to. But he couldn’t.

Natani came across as pure practicality. *Look, it’s your dick. What’s wrong with enjoying it?*

*It’s not **on me** at the moment!*

Amusement. I keep mine in a box. It came with a harness.

Zen let that one go by. *Look, he’s not doing it to me, okay? I shouldn’t... and I can’t...*

No use in any of that. He’d like to be doing it to you, too. Though... Thoughtful. You might not want to clue him in that you’re feeling it. I think he’d rather like another first time with it.

Zen sighed. *Fine, fine, fine. But you don’t realize, I have no way to—*

He felt the urge hit Natani again, suddenly, overpowering. His brother sighed, but didn’t move a muscle. Zen’s jaw dropped open.

How did you...

Wry smile in the link. *This isn’t so bad. Care to peruse my memories of estrus?*

Zen really, really didn’t, but Natani also sent an impression. Like a glass to a barrel. He choked. *How...? And you never...?*

Natani hesitated a moment, and the barrel shrunk to a half-barrel. *That first one was the one after I met Keith. You know how it is with us, more... specific. Sigh. I lost to that one after a few days.*

Days. Zen swallowed.

Amusement. Well, it’s not a battle I need to fight any more.

True enough. But hang on. *So you...?*

Fierce, fierce love for the basitin. *I didn't have the self-control, but Keith did. He guarded me.* Love and exasperation. *Even against myself.*

Zen found the wherewithal to ignore the sensations.

As Keith honed his technique, Natani became increasingly preoccupied with keeping his hips where they were supposed to be. Eventually the basitin changed his angle of attack, moving over to straddle Natani's chest rather than his legs.

Natani looked at the view with considerable interest. "Do I still have to keep my hands behind my head?"

Keith laughed and shot him a glance. "Yes!"

"Aww."

Natani tried to reach something with his head—no restrictions had been stipulated—but couldn't. "You're too tall, brother!"

Keith snorted, and thwapped him with his tail. Natani nipped at it. "You're **both** too tall. Now settle down, I'm starting to get the hang of this."

Natani grumbled, but stopped wriggling and pursuing the basitin's tail.

Zen marvelled at their interplay. It wasn't at all like he'd thought. Well, he'd tried not to think about it at all, but... it wasn't at all like he'd thought. Granted, it was his body, so... it was definitely nothing like he'd thought. Or felt.

Concern from Natani. *Regrets?*

Not this. Just... everything else.

Wordless curiosity.

Zen couldn't put it into words, so he showed his brother how he felt.

Natani answered immediately. *Ah. You've come in from the cold.*

Zen laughed quietly. *Yes.*

Affection. *Well, get warm, brother.*

Keith got serious, and all of his Natani's focus was suddenly on not having the unfamiliar body betray him. Zen only realized that his brother had been helping shield him from the forces in the link when that protection was removed. He ground his teeth as the phantom sensations of Keith's mouth on his member snapped into focus. He couldn't look away, not with his eyes, not with his senses. He could feel the basitin caressing him with his tongue, the heat of his mouth, just as clearly as he could see him strain

to capture as much as he could.

It wasn't just the sensations, either. Natani was becoming more familiar with the body, and his lust for Keith was finding shapes that were familiar to Zen. Those feelings were overlapping with his own, echoing and amplifying in the link. But while Natani could make the feelings reality, he could not. He was beside himself with desire. It was a special kind of torture; what he saw whet his appetite and what he felt through the link stoked the flames, but neither offered any relief. Unable to use his own body, unwilling to use this one.

Do I need to explain to my big brother how to find the clitoris?

THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM AND YOU KNOW IT

More practicality. You have that choice, if you can take it.

He countered with his exasperation. *And you know I can't.*

Understanding. *Should we stop this? Or would you like Keith to... some rather compelling mental images wafted through the link.*

Zen shook his head. *No. I'll deal with it. Just... try to be done before I completely lose my mind?*

Natani spoke up. "We need to speed this up."

Keith turned to look at Natani, who nodded towards Zen.

He was sitting cross-legged, with his hands squeezing his knees to keep them from doing anything else. He couldn't guess what his face looked like, but he tried for a smile. The heat had stopped building when Keith had relented, but that was all. What was there was already too much. The basitin looked at him with obvious concern. Somehow it helped to quell the flames. A little.

"What's happening to him?"

Natani answered diplomatically. "Strain from the link."

Keith quirked an eyebrow. "And you want to speed up?"

"It's complicated."

Keith looked at Zen for confirmation, and he loved the basitin a little more for it. He sighed, and nodded. "Please. It's getting to be a little much."

Keith scratched his head. "Well, let's see here..." He went back to his original position, straddling Natani's feet, and took a moment to stretch, relaxing his neck and shoulders. Zen was amused despite himself, and he

could feel it echoed in Natani.

Keith stroked Natani's member a few times with his hand, slowly. Natani groaned.

"How close are you?"

"I'm not sure."

Zen was. *Close. If you... let go.*

"Probably not far."

Keith nodded. He wrapped a fist around the base of Natani's member, snug against the knot, before leaning down to hover over it. "Natani..." the basitin gave his brother a quick look Zen couldn't decipher. "At will." And he took the remainder not covered by his hand into his mouth. Natani's hands shot out to the top of Keith's head. With a grunt, his brother pulled the basitin tighter to him.

Satisfied that Keith could handle this, Natani's control started peeling away, layer by layer. He began thrusting his hips, and Keith gave him some room to move, to slide back and forth in the basitin's tight fist and hot mouth.

Natani gave the urges free reign and his pace grew frantic, his motions erratic, until finally he thrust deep, every muscle in his body tense, his back arched, straining, trying to pierce the heavens. He was right at the edge. Keith adjusted his grip minutely, letting Natani pull him closer, and he exploded in release, the edge falling behind.

Natani tried to slam the link closed, but it would not go. Zen took the full brunt of his brother's sky-shattering orgasm, and none of the relief it should have brought. After firing his second exquisite jet deep into Keith's mouth, Natani collapsed to the ground, his hips twitching weakly as his body wrung his pleasure out, pumping more of his essence into Keith with each slow throb. Keith was swallowing, clearly trying to keep up, but some of his brother's issue escaped.

As the orgasm eased, the immense wave of satisfaction from Natani helped, a little, but the damage was redone when Keith began gently, carefully, and meticulously cleaning up what he'd let spill.

His brother squirmed and laughed under the basitin's attentions. "I feel like I just learned something about aftercare."

Keith finished by giving the tip a kiss. The basitin gave Natani a wry smile before starting to lick his hand clean.

Zen squeezed his eyes shut and whimpered. He rocked back and forth, but even that movement was enough to send unfamiliar shocks through this body, so he stopped and sat still, trembling. His whole world was impossible desire, and his mind was thick with it. He had thought of returning to his body, but there would be no relief there, either, not immediately.

He could feel something start to give out inside of him. *About that thing with Keith you suggested...*

Natani was a sea of calm, demanding his focus, and he was subsumed. *A step too far, brother. You can't let the body choose for you. **You** must choose.* Natani lent him stability, and he was himself again. *I will help you fight it.* Calm, stability, amusement. *If you **want** to fight it. He **is** quite good.*

Zen relaxed. He was insulated, for the moment. Without the distractions, the decision was easy. And not the one he expected.

I want to do it.

Approval. This you choose to do?

This I choose to do.

No regrets?

Not for anyone.

Enjoy!

And Natani withdrew from the link, settling into Zen's body much more comfortably than earlier. He was left almost alone with his lust for Keith. His eyes snapped open. Keith was looking at him, not far off. It seemed he'd started to come over, but Natani had grabbed him by the arm to stop him.

Natani let go and slapped him on the ass. "*Now you can go.*"

Keith shot him a mock-indignant glance and made his way over to Zen. He knelt down facing him again, not quite touching him, again. Zen sighed. The basitin's gentleness was torture.

Keith looked worried. "What's wrong? You look like... I'm not sure what you look like, but I want to do something about it."

Zen laughed weakly. "Please do."

Keith kissed him a question, and, finally having some channel for his de-

sire he dared to use, he answered in detail.

Keith pushed him down, and he sprawled on his back while the basitin showered him with attention. Keith went first to his breasts, touching, nuzzling, licking. Zen heard himself moan and clapped his hands on his mouth, mortified.

Natani sounded entirely too pleased with himself. "I think my brother finally noticed I have tits."

Zen laughed. It was the only thing he could do. *You've been keeping me sane, haven't you?*

Love. *Mostly just heckling.*

He gave up trying to stop the moans and let the reactions come as they may. And come they did, as Keith continued to lavish him with tender care, nuzzling his bosom. Zen reached out to give the basitin's ear a small pinch. It seemed the thing to do. Keith looked at him with a smile, then started making his way lower. Across Zen's stomach. He shivered with anticipation as the basitin made his approach. He circled around teasingly, and then, in one fell swoop, laid siege to his citadel. A shock ran through Zen. So powerful! Keith retreated a ways, testing his defenses. He tried to breach the gates with his tongue.

"Nope! Nope! Nope!"

Keith laughed and relented.

Natani commented archly. "Does not go for me, by the way."

Keith snorted. Zen rolled his eyes, then let out another moan as Keith returned to the battlements.

Curiosity and humour. *Why do you think of cunnilingus in terms of siege warfare?*

Oh, would you just shut up!

Laughter, both in the link and outside. Keith had returned to his main objective, and soon had him completely encircled. Zen found a space to sigh between his moans. "That's amazing."

Keith stayed at it, but Natani responded with glee. *He'll tease you for hours if you let him.*

Zen whimpered at the thought. *Do you ever let him?*

Untold satisfaction. *Sometimes.*

The thought was... but no, he was already far past any limits. “Keith... *please*. I can’t take much more of this.”

The basitin kissed an answer on his thigh and redoubled his efforts. He brought more force to bear, his tongue working Zen relentlessly, kneading him from all angles. Just the slightest, barest hint of teeth. Zen’s mind raced, trying to find the path his release would take, but it wasn’t there.

Natani nudged his mind gently. *Stop thinking.*

He did.

He’d been expecting a bolt of lightning, but it came in swells instead. His pleasure filled him to bursting, then more still. It crashed over him and carried him away, and it was a long moment before he thought again.

When he did, he laughed with sheer relief. Then with something else. “Dammit, Keith, stop that and get up here!”

The basitin appeared in his field of view, licking his lips and looking marvellously innocent. Zen didn’t buy it for a second. He pulled Keith down for a profoundly grateful and satisfied kiss, and to his surprise, that’s exactly what he got back. And never mind the erection he felt against his stomach.

He had to open the link to call to his brother, which meant it had to have been closed in the first place. How had that happened? *Is he really like this?*

Yes. It’s not like he’s completely selfless, but... right here? Right now?

The brothers’ feelings for the basitin overlapped. A point of commonality in their disparate loves. It was a heady feeling, and for the first time, Zen felt more than hope. *This could really work, couldn’t it?*

The answer was love. *Brother, how could this **not** work?*

Still awash in a sea of relief and with the feel of Keith’s short, warm, sandy fur against him, Zen began to believe. The joy of it was unlike anything he’d felt before, and with a laugh, he pulled the basitin into an embrace. It felt wonderful. His brother sent him an image of what it looked like, Keith’s face buried in his breasts, the basitin’s ears quivering and his tail twitching. Zen laughed again. *And he’d really be okay with stopping here?*

He really would be.

Surely *we can't let him get away with that.*

Amusement. *Exactly so. What did you have in mind?*

Zen gave him a rough sketch, and Natani signalled his approval.

He let the basitin go. "Keith?"

"Hm?"

"That thing you're poking me with? Bring it where I can see it."

Keith gathered himself on all fours and hustled up until he poked Zen in the chin. "Oops!"

Zen rolled his eyes as Keith tried for more height, then took his hands to the basitin's member to position it so he could see it. It was firm and warm and smooth, and he noted with some interest that there was some residue... he licked the tip, and felt Keith shiver at the touch of his tongue.

Not quite strawberries, no. But not unpleasant.

He guided the tip into his mouth and twirled his tongue around it, and was rewarded with another shiver and some more not-quite-strawberries. He smiled to himself. He could get used to these reactions.

He needed an expert opinion. *Think he's close?*

After everything? Fit to blow.

Then get over here!

Zen took a page from Keith's playbook and used one hand to guide and control the basitin and keep him out of his teeth. He used the other to tap him on the rump, and with a sigh Keith lowered himself deeper into Zen's ready mouth. He explored more of the length with his tongue, before pushing back against the tip. The basitin got the idea and started moving. Slowly, carefully. It was a pretty awkward position, but then, sometimes awkward could be nice.

Zen was dimly aware of Natani making his approach. His brother touched Keith on the leg to let him know that he was there—Keith shuddered.

Wait, what?

Amusement. *Not just to let him know I'm here.* He massaged the arch of one of the basitin's feet gently, and Zen got another taste of flavor.

Huh. He suddenly understood why his footrub comment hadn't been

funny.

Natani laughed gently. *He'll say it's cultural. Don't believe it.*

Not in a position to laugh, Zen signalled his own amusement in the link. *So do you think that would be better?*

Non-committal. *We'll go with yours.*

And with that, Natani went for Keith's sack with an eager tongue. The basitin gasped, and Zen focused on his own part. They shared only enough awareness to co-ordinate their actions, to devastating effect; they soon had Keith shuddering under their attentions. Natani wandered upwards, and Zen focused all of his attention on his own performance. The occasional droplets became almost a stream. Natani finessed his finishing touch, and Keith thrust deeper with a grunt as he released his first jet. The basitin sent pulse after pulse into Zen's mouth, thrusting in small movements with each one. He lapped it up eagerly and kept swallowing, milking the Basitin until he ran dry.

Keith carefully pulled out and gave Zen a languid kiss before rolling over to sprawl on his back, sighing happily. "The Magi Brothers make a devastating combination."

Natani grinned. "Damn right."

Zen sat up to look at Keith basking in the afterglow. It was a good sight, and he could feel his brother appreciating it as well.

After a moment, Natani made his way to between the basitin's legs and settled into a comfortable position. He looked at Keith with a smile and a "Let me know if it's too much." before slowly gathering his entire basitinhoo into his mouth.

Zen's eyebrows shot up. *Aftercare?*

We'll see. Watch him for me.

Zen watched, and shared his vision. Keith seemed to him to be on the edge between pleasure and discomfort, and no wonder. He knew his brother was being very careful, but still...

The discomfort faded, and... *He's **hard** again?*

Natani backed off to reveal Keith's glistening manhood in full fighting trim. He grinned at Zen. "Uh-huh."

Keith got up on his elbows and gave Natani a look, narrowing his eyes.

“Were you planning on *doing* something with that, or are you just showing off?”

Natani looked at him innocently. “And if I’m just showing off?”

Keith furrowed his brows. “I... hope he’s impressed, I guess?”

Zen laughed. “Oh, I’m impressed.”

Impressed and intrigued. Keith had sapped the worst of his reservoir of desire, but there was still some left... He realized his tail was wagging.

Keith raised an eyebrow at Natani. “So, *were* you just showing off?”

Natani shrugged expressively. “*This* body is still useless, I’m afraid.”

Zen swatted at him. “Hey! Nothing wrong with my body. *You* were just backed up.”

Natani laughed uproariously. “Truer words, brother. Truer words.”

Zen cleared his throat. “Actually, I might...” They both looked at him curiously, and he found he was too embarrassed to continue. “That is... I’ve always been curious... err...”

Natani’s glee was palpable. “If you’ll allow me to translate, I believe my brother wants to be fucked in the ass.”

Zen blushed and gave him a glare, then forced himself to look at Keith. “In so many words... yes.”

Keith smiled at him reassuringly. “Hey, everybody’s got one.”

Wait. “So you...?”

Keith nodded. “Uh-huh.”

And that means...

Natani nodded. “Mm-hmm.”

Zen shook his head and laughed. “Why do I even ask any more.”

Keith sat up and settled into a cross-legged position. He pulled at his ear thoughtfully. “So... how is this to be? Will you be sorting yourselves out now?”

The brothers looked at each other. Zen had been expecting to return, but found he didn’t really have a preference at the moment. An ass is an ass.

Natani did. *Actually, you might have an easier time of it with that one.* Amusement, the suggestion of an eyebrow. *Unless there’s something you haven’t been telling me?* Zen let the insinuations wash over him. Natani continued. *And I might find another first yet, tonight. If you don’t object?*

Zen didn't. He looked at Keith and smiled. "It is to be like it is."

The basitin shot a sideways glance at Natani. "Sounds a lot like my life."

Natani leaned over to give him a kiss. Zen felt Natani's tenderness, and could see the basitin's ears quiver with it. Natani broke the kiss to smile at Keith, and stroked his cheek. "And would you have it any other way?"

Keith rested his head for a moment against Natani's chest. "Not for anything."

Zen was glad for them, truly, and had half a mind to give the basitin a hug, but... he rolled his eyes. "Are you trying to kill my boner here? Because it's not working."

They both laughed. Keith went to rummage through their gear, and Zen watched with interest. From the bag with Keith's ceremonial armor, there emerged a by-now-highly-suspicious box, a small pot, and... were those nuts? The other objects disappeared back where they came from, and the basitin returned with the pot. He opened the lid to show Zen; it was some kind of white salve.

"What is it?"

Natani answered. "An interesting bit of herbal lore I picked up."

"That's... so you've been using my mortar to... you know what? Good thinking."

Keith scratched his head. "There are other options, but they're, more, well, *extreme*. Anyway, how do you want to do this?"

Zen answered by turning around and sticking his ass in the air, looking back at the basitin and moving his tail out of the way.

Keith snickered. "O-kay then. That should work." He scooped a healthy dollop of the salve into his hands and coated his member with it liberally. "This will feel cold..." and it did, as he smeared the remainder against Zen's opening. He shivered, but not with the cold.

"Ready?"

Zen swallowed. "Yeah."

Keith tried to position himself, then sighed and muttered something about wolves. "Can you lean forward? Or move your legs? I need you to be a bit lower."

Some semi-organized wriggling later, they had everything lined up and

Zen could feel Keith's tip pressing against him gently. Keith chuckled. "Still ready?"

He laughed. "Still ready."

"Tell me *immediately* if there's any pain, okay? And that goes for you, too, Natani. I don't want any fool wolf bravery."

Zen grumbled assent. To be honest, he was touched by the concern.

"Okay, here we go. And it's going to sound dumb, but *relax* is still the best advice I can give you. You can trust me to be careful."

Zen closed his eyes and focused on the sensations as Keith slowly, slowly pushed against him. He shivered as first the tip, then, inch by inch, the shaft entered him. Until he could feel the basitin's hips against his rear, and all of Keith inside him. He felt full with it.

Keith cleared his throat. "Well. That was anti-climactic."

Zen laughed happily. The sense of fullness and connection was wonderful. He'd been worried for nothing. Now if only Keith had a knot...

Oh?

He hurled choice expletives at his brother, but couldn't stay serious. *Is this because the body knows?*

Natani considered. *Some of it must be. But not all, I think. Glee. You might be a natural.*

Fine, then he'd be a natural. Natani signalled affection and... respect? Zen shrugged mentally. "Keith? I'm fine, you can start moving."

Natani confirmed. "Completely fine. Might as well have been me." Zen could hear the grin in his voice. "Or you."

Keith began moving, ever so slowly, withdrawing until only the tip was in, then pushing until Zen could feel his hips pressing against his rear. He sighed happily.

The basitin answered his brother, and he could hear the grin there, too. "Care to try me?"

Natani sighed. "Believe me, I'd like to. But I'm still sore."

"Well, get over here, then. Maybe I can work some of that same magic you did."

Natani was clearly interested. *Okay to distract him?*

Go ahead. I feel like my body has something to prove, anyway...

Zen was dimly aware that Natani walked over to stand next to Keith, who eagerly went to work on that magic. But it didn't break Keith's rhythm, and Zen was quickly losing interest in everything that wasn't what the basitin was doing to him; and when Keith sneaked one hand under him, he lost the last of it. The world was heat and friction and pleasure and sheer Keithlust, but it was also love and joy and affection and fulfilment. At some point the basitin maneuvered him down to the ground, and he started grinding against Keith's hand, trapped under him, as his brother found the wherewithal to 'try' the basitin. Keith was lying on top of him, his head resting against Zen's shoulders. The basitin was barely moving himself, but Natani's thrusts carried him deep in turn as well, time and again. His brother set to the task of wringing Keith dry with obvious relish, and as he did, Zen was carried away on the wave.

*

Keith woke up to a hint of sunlight and the wonderful warmth of Natani asleep next to him. They were on their sides, and he had his arms around the big wolf. Unusual. Memories flooded back, and it occurred to him that it might be Zen instead. He smiled to himself. What a night!

He wondered idly if it mattered all that much right this moment which one it was. He decided it didn't, but it *did* matter where the other one was, and why. He extricated himself carefully and gave the wolf a kiss on the shoulder before standing up to stretch. He was satisfied to find his body none the worse for wear, despite all the interesting new challenges.

The campfire was going, so he peeked his head out to take a look. The early morning air was strikingly cold. There was the other wolf, tending the fire, robed. Too far to be sure about eye colour, but he guessed Zen from the posture.

"Hey, can you melt some snow for me?"

He got a nod in return. "Sure", and the wolf dumped some more into a pot that had probably already been used for the purpose. He also started preparing coffee, so... yeah, almost certainly Zen.

Keith retreated inside to grab a towel and wait. Not much point putting on a robe for the kind of washing up he needed to do, so this was going to be

interesting. Then again...

“Snow’s up”, came the call. Must’ve been mostly water to start with to be that quick.

He returned outside and made sure he had the right wolf when he grabbed the pot. “Thanks, Zen!”

He heard a “No problem” as he quickly made his way off to the side with the warm water and towel.

Keith was shivering when he returned from his ablutions, but at least he was clean and dry. No icicles. The fire was still going, but Zen was nowhere to be seen. He hurried inside after returning the pot, and *there* the wolf was, seated, waiting with coffee. Welcome sights both.

Keith hung the towel up on a likely line, then turned to Zen. He did his best “freezing basitin” impression, little acting required. “Warm me up?”

“Why don’t you just...” Zen shook his head and laughed, softly. “Of course. Come here, you.”

The wolf set the coffee down at a safe distance and spread his arms, and Keith happily collapsed into them. He wrapped his arms around Zen and nuzzled the wolf’s neck, burying his nose in the thick fur. The warmth was intoxicating. Zen stroked Keith’s back gently, and he sighed happily.

Nothing felt wrong... But he hadn’t been there when Keith woke up. He pulled away a bit to look at the wolf. “So what were you doing out there? Should I be worried?”

“Woke up, too many thoughts to sleep.” Zen chuckled. “Kinda sticky, too.” He kissed Keith on the forehead. “No need to worry.”

Keith disentangled himself enough to get one of the coffee cups. There were two. He raised an eyebrow at Zen.

“I already had mine, but it doesn’t look like Natani is waking up this time so... I guess I’ll have that one, too.”

Keith handed it to him and snuggled back up, finessing a position where he could drink and stay warm. He took a sip. It was hot and wonderful, not unlike some other things in his life. He rolled his eyes at himself. “What kind of thoughts?”

Zen took a sip as well. “Last night was... I guess I still don’t have the words. Natani said I felt like I ‘came in from the cold’, and to ‘get warm’, and... I guess I did.”

Keith was puzzled. “You’re not talking literally, are you?”

“Nope. It’s like my entire life... ah.” He laughed quietly. “I found what I didn’t even know to look for. It was my miracle.”

“What was?”

“You and Natani. And you. And Natani.”

Keith shook his head, but he smiled, as well. “Care to make any sense?”

Zen smiled. “Not really. None of the best things in life do.”

“O-ho!” Keith considered. “Well, you *are* in that category...”

Zen kissed him on the head again and smiled. “Considering how you’re acting, I take it you don’t have any regrets?”

Keith looked at Zen, and gave him his most honest smile. It came so much easier than it once had. “No regrets.”

Zen blushed beautifully. He’d have to remember that.

The wolf cleared his throat and looked away. “That just leaves Natani.”

Keith turned to consider Natani as well. He smiled at the sleeping figure. “Natani doesn’t do regret. Says ‘s my department.”

Zen chuckled. “Yeah, I’m not worried. He was amazing last night.”

Keith sighed happily. “I’ll say.” That got him thinking, and he finished his coffee. He adjusted his ears strategically and looked at Zen. “Should I apologize for making that request yesterday?”

Zen looked at him and narrowed his eyes. For a long moment, he seemed to be struggling with something. Then he sighed. “Okay, I’m *pretty* sure you’re just full of shit right now, but I don’t know all your tells when you’re being cute, so I have to play this straight. So listen up.”

Zen booped him on the nose. “Natani warned me you might feel bad about it, so I accepted *knowing* you might feel bad about it, so you’re not *allowed* to feel bad about it.” He thought for a moment, then continued with devastating sincerity. “Actually, Keith, you’re not allowed to feel bad about *me*. Okay?”

It was his nature that it was those words, said with complete earnestness, that made it really hit home. Zen loved him. He could feel the familiar

tears welling in his eyes. The wolf looked alarmed, so he laughed and wiped them away. “Don’t worry, that was the opposite of bad.” He hugged Zen. “Message received, loud and clear.” He sighed happily. “That makes two wolves I’m not allowed to regret.”

Zen grinned. “We do have some things in common.”

“Like me?”

“Like you.”

After a while, Zen continued. “Actually... there is something I should warn you about. When Natani and I feel the same way about something, what with the link, it can... *amplify*. There was some of that last night.”

Keith was curious. “Really? What was it?”

Zen cleared his throat. “Let’s call it... Keithlust.”

He choked. “Well. Thanks for the warning, but I think I’m fine with that.” More than fine. He could feel his tail swish of its own volition. He was sure Zen could, too.

“All warm now?”

Keith considered. “Warm-ish.”

“And what would it take to get rid of the ish?”

He narrowed his eyes. “Are you using your roguish charm on me?”

Zen kissed him gently. “Always.”

It did help with the ish. “Maybe another?”

Zen obliged, and they held a long conversation with no words in it. Zen was different from both how he had been outside, that first time, and how he had been in Natani’s body. He seemed to have found a middle ground between the two, and Keith got lost in it for a while.

He looked up at the wolf, breathless. “And you’re sure I don’t need to apologize?”

Zen kissed him on the nose. “I’ll only love you forever for what you did.”

Keith’s ears perked despite himself and he sighed happily. There went any hope of that performance. Ah well. “And here I was hoping I could make it up to you.”

A beat. “Then again, it really was quite heartless of you.”

They both laughed.

“Just... hypothetically, what did you have in mind?”

“I wanted another look at that thing *you’ve* been poking *me* with.”

“You noticed, huh?”

“It’s *really* hard to miss.”

Zen grinned at him. “Well, I’m sure a look can’t hurt...” He went to pull his robe off, and Keith gave him space. Zen let the garment fall beside him.

Keith admired the wolf in all his glory, then glanced at him innocently. “And if a look isn’t enough?”

Zen sighed happily. “Keith, do what the hell ever you want with it.”

He grinned, and did. Remembering what the wolf had said last night, he went immediately for Zen’s sack. The wolf grunted appreciatively as he nuzzled right up to it. Zen’s scent was already becoming familiar to him; distinct from Natani’s, but just as powerful in its own way. He set about licking the wolf’s sack slowly, not-so-accidentally nudging his member every once in a while.

“Yep, yep, yep!”

Keith chuckled and moved on to licking Zen’s knot. It was half again as wide as the rest of his not-inconsiderable member, and Keith had to wonder if... He knew Natani hadn’t been trying to get it in last night, but didn’t know if that was concern for him, or something else.

It occurred to him that Zen was being awfully timid. The most he’d gotten out of the wolf was a happy sigh. Keith looked up at him from behind the immediate obstacle, narrowing his eyes. “Not doing anything for you?”

Zen let out a pained laugh. “You have *no idea* what you’re doing to me. But I learned something very important about self-control last night, and I’m being good.”

Keith smiled up at him mischievously. “And if I want you to be bad?”

Zen sighed. “*Please* don’t do that to me right now, I’m having a hard enough time as it is!”

Clearly this was important to him. Keith changed tack. “Then be good a while longer”, and he slowly started licking his way up Zen’s shaft, meeting something making its way down on the way. Not unpleasant at all. He stopped when he reached the tip, and looked up at Zen. He started playing with it with his tongue, teasing, watching the wolf’s expressions play out. Yes, he could get used to this.

He took the tip into his mouth, being very careful with his teeth, and slowly began to engulf Zen's wolfhood. When the tip was near the back of his throat he stopped for a while, thinking. He'd started to get the hang of this last night... He began swallowing Zen's length, and the wolf let out a strangled sigh. He could feel Zen's muscles twitching and tensing, but that self-control still held. Keith pushed farther still, until he kissed the knot. Zen groaned, but still did not move. And if he had *that* much control...

Keith held there a moment, then slowly, slowly backed off. He was amazed he'd pulled that off, and when he could see the wolf's face again it became apparent he wasn't the only one. Keith gave the tip a kiss, then smiled at the wolf and stood.

Zen blinked at him. "My turn?"

"Actually, since you've been so good I thought I should reward you..."

*

Natani was floating in that half-awake place where he preferred to stay a while each morning, if there was no pressing need to do otherwise. And this particular morning, there were the pleasing sounds that were reaching his ears and the faint echoes of pleasanter yet sensations in the link. Pleasure with no effort was a welcome thing, of a morning. Not that Keith didn't sometimes—

Natani!

Clear alarm. He snapped awake and sat up, getting his bearings, leaning on Zen in the link to get up to speed. The alarm was about Keith, who was... Natani's eyebrows rose appreciatively as he took in the scene. Zen was flat on his back, and Keith was straddling him, facing him, and very, *very* nearly knotted with him. The Basitin's whole body was shaking, and he was letting out one long, low moan. There was a constant stream from his member onto Zen's stomach.

Thoughts were faster than words. *It's fine. Probably. Stay still; don't panic.*

Natani did a quick bit of exploratory magic to confirm what he suspected, and to make sure what he had in mind was actually possible. It looked to be. Natani grinned to himself.

Yup, we're okay.

Keith had his hands on Zen's legs, aiding in supporting him, but he clearly wanted to be doing something else with them. *Keep his hands where they are.*

Zen was puzzled but did as he was asked, putting his own hands on top of Keith's. Keith looked at him with tears in his eyes. "Please, Zen, I have to..."

Natani was at his side, and kissed him, as gently as he could. Were there more tears? "We'll take care of it, okay?"

Keith closed his eyes and sighed. "*Please.*"

This was going to be tremendous. Natani got the lay of the land; if he—and then Zen— yup, that should do it.

He sent the choreography to his brother. *Here's how this plays out. Though...* Natani couldn't resist making a bit of an addition. He dropped to the floor and spent a few precious moments with Keith's feet, licking the pad of the one he could more easily reach, and playing with the other. Keith cried out, and Natani could feel the basitin's toes twitching.

Really? Licking?

Natani licked his lips and grinned. *He keeps clean.*

Amusement. ... *he would, huh.*

Natani got into position. *Right. Ready?*

Ready.

Natani pushed at Keith *just so* while giving the base of his tail a sharp tug downwards. At the same time, Zen thrust up with his hips. Keith settled down with a jerk, the knot well and truly in. His entire body convulsed, and Natani hurried to catch his manhood with his mouth. He made just it in time. The basitin's first jet erupted into his mouth, and at the same instant Natani could feel his brother go over. He slammed the link shut. No time to be distracted. Even so, he was dimly aware of the strength of his brother's orgasm. Maybe there *was* something to knotting... But Keith was his focus. He kept one hand on the Basitin's back at all times, the other supporting himself as he drank deep. He'd never been in position to try and catch this in his mouth before, and it was proving challenging. Swallow as he would, some dripped out. After an endless moment it stopped coming, though

Keith was still in the throes of it, twitching in his mouth. The well had run dry, but the pump was still running.

He straightened up and grabbed both of Keith's shoulders, ready to support him. He had time for the link again, and found that his brother had returned to earth.

*What the **hell** was that?*

Natani laughed. *A very good time, brother. Good work. **Now** he's satisfied.*

Zen shook his head in wonderment. *I've never seen anything like that.*

It happens from time to time. Though, that was a huge one. Maybe the biggest one yet. It's still— Keith's body went limp with a sigh and Natani caught him, careful not to let his weight do unfortunate things. *Never mind, he's done.* He considered the logistics of the situation. *Err... how quickly can you get loose?*

Zen was incredulous. *He's **out cold**? There's a mental trick to speed it up, but it'll still take me a while.*

I've got him, do what you gotta do.

I guess this wasn't the best position if that was going to happen.

A most distinct mental image reached Natani. Keith, on his back with his legs in the air. Zen, holding the basitin's legs to his chest, plowing into him, straining to push his knot in. His face buried in Keith's feet, the basitin completely lost to the world.

Natani was impressed. *Good thought, brother. But I doubt it's making you go soft any faster.*

Mortified silence from the other side of the link. Natani mused. *And where would we find a table? That position—*

I'm not even into feet!

Natani laughed affectionately. *I think you'll find, brother, that one picks these things up when one's in love.*

... so does he ever... ?

It's nice enough, but doesn't do much for me, I'm afraid. Not that I mind if he keeps trying, who knows? Doing it to him, on the other hand... well.

Zen sighed. They were quiet for a moment.

A point of curiosity occurred to Natani. *So, this mental trick of yours... is that something I'll need to know?*

I'm not sure. Zen was deadpan. Maybe you'd like to stay knotted?

Natani grinned at his brother. *I might, at that.*

Zen was eventually able to extricate himself and they carefully laid Keith down on the bedding. "Is he... purring?"

Natani smiled warmly and gave the insensate basitin a kiss on the forehead. "Indeed he is. Here's what you do."

And he showed Zen how Keith liked his ears stroked, not by way of the link, but by way of example. Zen took to it quickly, and for a time they were both doing it.

Zen had that expression that told Natani his brother was about to say something he thought was funny. "You know, he said I was his type."

Well, duh. "Yeah?"

"Think we should keep him away from the guild building?"

Natani laughed. "For his sake, or theirs?"

Zen raised his eyebrows. "Good question. I'm not sure who'd come out on top..."

Another moment of comfortable silence, then Natani stood, sighing. "I'll be right back. Stay with him, okay? I feel like it matters when he gets like this."

Zen nodded, and Natani could feel that he understood. "I'll be here."

*

Keith came to slowly. It was full day now, the sun lending some of its warmth to the tent. Unnecessarily. The two wolves were dozing by his side, one on each shoulder. One had a hand on his stomach, the other his chest. He was enveloped in their warmth and their familiar scents, and felt like he could melt away into them. All had never been more right in the world.

A gust of wind somehow found its way into the tent, but could not touch him. It brought with it just the faintest hint of spring. Outside, the snow would be melting as fast as it had come. As he drifted back to sleep, there was one thought that lingered in his mind.

Estrus was coming.