Coveting Wisdom

Posted originally on the fanfiction.lol at https://fanfiction.lol/works/1327.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	Slash (M/M)
Fandom:	Witch Hat Atelier
Relationship:	Beldaruit/Deanreldy Ezrest
Characters:	Beldaruit (Witch Hat), Deanreldy Ezrest, Lagrah (Witch Hat), Zazamaiya Ezrest, Riliphin (Witch Hat)
Additional Tags:	Pansexual Character, POV Beldaruit, Top Deanreldy Ezrest, Bottom Beldaruit, Anxiety, Older Man/Younger Man, Younger Top, Older Bottom, Cautious allies to fuckbuddies, Blow Jobs, Anal Sex, Kissing, Open Marriage, Disabled Character(s), Set after Witch Hat Atelier Chapter 95, Ambiguous/Open Ending
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2026-05-18 Completed: 2026-06-08 Words: 11,730 Chapters: 4/4

Coveting Wisdom

by FallLover

Summary

While recovering in Ezrest, Beldaruit is still at odds with Deanreldy. A conversation with Zazamaiya further unmoors him, opening his thoughts to new possibilities in his relationship with the nation’s overly charismatic king.

Notes

This was originally published on Archive of Our Own.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“How are you feeling today, o Wise One?” Deanreldy asked with one of his typical smirks as he stood in the sun in Beldaruit’s castle chambers. Perhaps a kinder man would call it a roguish or handsome smile on a man many would beg to share a room with. Let alone lay on a bed while said king walked ever closer.

Beldaruit pressed his lips together, annoyed more than charmed (hopefully). He was not a desperate fanboy, but rather an injured witch only here until his body healed. And the most that could be said was that he was grateful Deanreldy didn’t bring his cats. “I am not further injured.” The sudden visit meant that neither Riliphin nor Lagrah were around as back-up, as the former was busy stretching his legs, and the latter was busy with cleaning up after Silver Eve.

Beldaruit wondered if Deanreldy had arrived at such a time on purpose. To catch Beldaruit alone and seemingly at the king’s mercy.

He would be wrong.

Deanreldy nodded his head, as if this was useful information and not Beldaruit desperately trying to avoid being drawn into another verbal battle. “The splint did its job, then?” He walked over to Beldaruit’s right side, and Beldaruit dutifully moved his right arm carefully out for better viewing. Deanreldy reached and gently touched the limb, his expression growing impassive in thought.

Beldaruit wondered, foolishly, what years of knowledge were running through the man’s head. The Wise in Teachings had gone through years of his own training, and life itself was always about learning something new. But here, at Beldaruit’s fingertips, was a world barred from him forever, even as it was so necessary. In Beldaruit’s early years, learning to navigate witchcraft with his at times frustrating body, he had learned many things from doctors, mostly in what to avoid and be wary of. But there was far more of healing he hadn’t learned than witchcraft. And never would, despite recent events.

That was the problem with Deanreldy. Witches and this king could work together, but there would always be danger. And pretending things could be as they once were was foolishness.

“I believe so,” Beldaruit replied. He continued watching Deanreldy work, much as the man being nearby felt like a prickly sensation on his skin. A good one or a terrifying one, Beldaruit truly didn’t know. The man wrecked the careful balance between them in a moment, seemingly happily enough. And yet it wasn’t as if Beldaruit could flee elsewhere, not in his condition, and the state of Ezrest after the Silver Eve disaster meant *some* witches were still needed here. Vinanna was still recovering from Easthies’ actions, and Lagrah was

besieged by questions and more demands from the other rulers. Things were fractious, and Beldaruit could not treat this as a simple visit from a doctor.

But in moments like this, it was difficult to remind himself that Deanreldy was as dangerous as Beldaruit knew him to be. He didn't treat Beldaruit like a hot coal or object of worship, but as a peer. Even while Deanreldy was one of the most powerful and knowledgeable figures in Ezrest, and sharp, to boot. Handsome, charismatic… Ridiculous as he'd been at times during Silver Eve, he'd still cut quite the figure, and made disliking him difficult, especially when they'd been so close already. Beldaruit, with all his extra time, some of which wasn't taken up with reviewing materials Lagrah or Riliphin brought him, catching Vinanna up, or speaking to visitors, had annoyingly kept thinking of all he knew of the man, which led back to Deanreldy on the back of Beldaruit's sealchair…

It's been too long since I've been in prolonged, close proximity to someone who wasn't a student or peer, Beldaruit thought with a deep, stabilizing breath. He'd had a number of partners over the years, some long, some brief. His last had been brief, and several months ago, and he'd been too busy with his new students to find someone new.

Though clearly I need to, Beldaruit thought, *if my mind is this distracted by one attractive man.* He did not mind sleeping alone, though he enjoyed the presence of others when he worked, usually for inspiration and chatter. Unfortunately, he was alone much of the time in Ezrest, as he ensured Riliphin wasn't trapped in this room with him, particularly while the boy was open to going out and talking with others, and Lagrah had many duties of his own to take care of.

"Have you cleaned your back today?" Deanreldy asked as he carefully let go of Beldaruit's arm. "I can check the healing there, as well, while I'm here."

"I did so this morning," Beldaruit said. "And you may." He stripped down quickly so that they could get it done with, and stayed still while Deanreldy looked him over. Despite Deanreldy's actions, Deanreldy was still the most capable doctor known, and if Beldaruit ever wanted to leave, the man's professionalism would get him home sooner.

"An improvement," Deanreldy finally judged, "Though it would be even better if you got more exercise. I suppose Silver Eve was not bad for everything."

Beldaruit scowled at that. "My back is hardly worth all the suffering that occurred."

"Indeed," Deanreldy said. "But we take what we can get." He stepped back and let Beldaruit put his clothes back on. "You are angry with me now, o Wise One."

Beldaruit *didn't* glare. "Do you expect me to be glad of the state you've left us in?" They'd barely spoken since the *incident* in front of the public, though requests were mounting for more magic help, and this was not Deanreldy's first visit to check on Beldaruit afterward.

"An acknowledgement of what many with eyes to see and ears to hear would notice is hardly my fault," Deanreldy replied. His eyes on Beldaruit's skin felt hot. "I would have been criticized for not acknowledging your aid." He smiled then. "Or perhaps you would prefer that? Have you witches in ascendance, and Ezrest's seat clouded over in shame?"

“Of course not!” Beldaruit said, angry at such an accusation. “But it could have been handled more… *delicately*. That’s all.” Somewhere perhaps only the nobles could see, or something. With more thought, he knew that Deanreldy had been cornered, too. And it pushed aside questions about *who* had caused the Silver Eve disaster: namely, two witches. Although they’d been in Deanreldy’s care at the time, they were still witches. Deanreldy’s kneeling had meant that Ezrest was *grateful*, though, but it was a gratitude easily removed, were the public to learn that a helping hand could so easily turn to evil.

The change is still a threat of its own, Beldaruit thought as he shakily did the ties of his gown. *One that we’ll have to navigate for who knows how long. If not forever.*

“Would you like help, o Wise One?” Deanreldy asked, stepping closer. He’d noticed that Beldaruit was having some trouble doing all this one-handed.

“I can manage,” Beldaruit replied, though his annoyance made him take a little longer. And a brief thought of Deanreldy’s fingers on his chest again, working at Beldaruit's ties, was oddly distracting.

Foolish, Beldaruit thought. *He is my doctor. I am his patient. That is all. And he is a king, on top of that. One who could make things even worse for witches everywhere if he wished.*

He needed to get out of here when he could. He was weary and recovering, not up to whatever *this* was.

“I will visit on the morrow then,” Deanreldy said. “To check on you once more.” When Beldaruit looked up at him, about to ask why a king in a city recovering from disaster had so much free time, Deanreldy continued, “I would hate to see you in further discomfort here.”

It was said for politeness’ sake. For politics. But somehow Beldaruit noticed the man’s eyes were still on Beldaruit’s clumsy fingers.

Does he so dislike me disrobed? Beldaruit thought, annoyed. The man was certainly clingy enough when he needed to be. He’d treated the sealchair ride like a child with a bright toy.

“If you have any need of me,” Deanreldy continued, “simply call for me. I am at the Wise One’s disposal. No request is above me.”

“…Of course,” Beldaruit said. *What does he think I’d ask him to do? Kneel again?* The thought was embarrassing at best.

Deanreldy nodded and walked out of the room, leaving the space far emptier.

Beldaruit breathed in deeply, and went slower as he finished putting himself together. *Such a strange man.* He smiled bitterly. *And I, stranger still, for not knowing what to do now…*

He’d barely settled down when there was another knock on the door, and the guard called in, “Her Majesty, Queen Zazamaiya!”

Beldaruit sat up in surprise as the queen walked in. “Forgive me, o Wise One, coming to you when you are unwell. But my curiosity overcame me.” Zazamaiya was not as overwhelming

as her husband was, and moved slowly due to her pregnancy, but she was still a bright, beautiful woman. Lagrah had spoken of her steady leadership and knowledge during Silver Eve. “I imagine you are quite lonely here, so long from your home.”

“I have companionship, Your Majesty,” Beldaruit said. “But I am always grateful for visitors.” He kept his expression friendly, but did not think for a moment that Zazamaiya was precisely less dangerous than her husband just because she was not involved much in negotiation with the witches. After all, Zazamaiya herself was a queen and a seasoned politician, and, given this extra opportunity, might try avenues to advance her people’s cause with the witches that Deanreldy hadn’t or perhaps couldn’t tackle. Plus, any person who held the affections of Deanreldy was someone to be wary of, and Beldaruit knew she was good in a tough situation.

But, although Beldaruit tried to avoid schmoozing with the nobility – that was Langah’s job, if it was anyone’s – it was hard to reject a queen. And he *did* miss the visitors he had in the Great Hall. He missed all the children with their curiosity and problems. Things he could solve, where magic was at his fingertips at all times… rather than sending approvals and papers off elsewhere and waiting here in a messy situation, in a castle with no magic to be had, other than that which kept it magicless. And an injured arm on top of everything else, kept controlled by pain medication and an annoying splint.

“I was wondering if you’d like to take lunch together,” Zazamaiya said. “Usually we have feasts for Silver Eve, but things being as they are, that is not the easiest. And I’m afraid most everyone else is still busy with clean-up.”

Beldaruit felt the sting there. He was not necessarily *not* busy just because he was not out and about. And eating lunch with the queen of Ezrest, after everything he’d been through with Deanreldy…

“I’ve been giving orders and checking on supplies all day,” Zazamaiya noted. “Trying to make sure those most in need are getting help. But I would hate to leave my guests unsupported, too, and I’ve heard you’ve been somewhat *trapped* in here. Although I know it is easier and safer, your recovery does not mean you should be so.”

“Your hospitality is unfailing, Your Majesty,” Beldaruit said. He knew it was unwise to cut himself off from outsiders out of paranoia, and that the witches would need all their allies in the days to come. Deanreldy was not the only source of careful support they might lean on out of necessity. “And I would be happy to take lunch with you.”

It was still a risk. But he would also not mind leaving the room for somewhere else, at least for a while. And it might make certain irritating kings leave his thoughts for a bit.

“I have a parlor with a pleasant view if you’d like to join me there?” Zazamaiya suggested with a warm smile. “If it’s still too much trouble, I can have everything brought back here to dine more comfortably.”

“I would be happy to see your parlor,” Beldaruit said, and hoped Lagrah and Vinanna didn’t get on his case about this. “But I must call a guard to carry me.” And to let Riliphin know he was out. The young man needed to know where to go to in an emergency.

“Of course,” Zazamaiya said. “I’ll send ahead for them to prepare the meal for us.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“I’ve had no issue with either of my pregnancies,” Zazamaiya said as Beldaruit settled into his comfortable chair in her bright parlor while the guards retreated to give them room, “but my dear husband insists on pampering me to the best of his ability. If I didn’t put my foot down, I imagine I’d suffocate under such pampering.”

Beldaruit had to admit Zazamaiya’s parlor was quite full of comforts, far more than most nobles Beldaruit knew of. Pillows for chairs and couches, thick tapestries and carpets, a large lit hearth to keep the place warm in the encroaching chill of the season, and blankets galore. The table was covered in more food than two people could eat, glowing in the firelight and bits of sunshine from the large open balcony with fine curtains pushed back a little, to support the torchlight. They could see a bit of the city at a distance. It wasn’t as stunning a view as it might be in a warmer time, but still more than Beldaruit got from his own closed-off rooms.

“Does it frustrate you?” Beldaruit asked as he wondered just what he should start off with. He really wasn’t used to this overwhelming finery. And it made him miss his own home, especially when various warmth and fire spells would have kept him more comfortable and the air less full of the stench of oil and burning. Instead, he was loaded into a thick coat, had to manage his splint, and sat on thick pillows with a blanket over his lap. “It sounds like it does.”

Zazamaiya chuckled. “Sometimes. But telling him off gets him to go away for a while.” Her expression grew fond. “And I’d rather he fussed over me than things he can’t fix as much.” She looked over towards the balcony with a somber expression. “He goes out on patrol or heads to the spire to help much of the day. At least here, I can coax him to sleep, where it’s warm.”

“He’s not sleeping enough?” Beldaruit asked in surprise. Deanreldy seemed plenty rested when last Beldaruit saw him. He always seemed *too* full of energy, really. *If he’s going out into the city in this chill, from where does he draw his fire?*

“He masks it well,” Zazamaiya replied. “It’s part of his appeal: it gets people to admire him. A king who can always keep going, regardless of whatever stands in his way.”

Beldaruit wondered if an overworked Deanreldy boded ill. Of course Deanreldy was a busy politician, but if he was so stressed now, those pushing to enlarge their own power bases might have an easier time.

And why is she telling me this? Beldaruit wondered. Given Deanreldy’s own sharpness on control practiced by witches, he couldn’t imagine Zazamaiya’s goal in pointing out one of the man’s weaknesses *to a witch*. And one of the three Wise. Beldaruit did not think it was done carelessly.

“He visits you a great deal, o Wise One,” Zazamaiya said as she picked up a small pink fruit with green edges. “I think he’s spreading the worry around. Which can be good or ill.” She smiled at Beldaruit. “He noted you get so irritable when he comes to visit, and I cannot help but feel some companionship.”

Beldaruit forced a smile. “I am unused to being treated by a king, Your Majesty.” Normally he’d just go to the nearest regular doctors, and that was rare. He was decently active and healthy before Silver Eve. But being in Ezrest just made everything worse, even ignoring the broken arm.

But it would not be good if Zazamaiya thought he had some complaint against her husband’s care.

“You are used to rule, though,” Zazamaiya said, continuing to smile. “Among your own people. In your own hall. And yet you do not expect to be treated the same here?”

“I am not a *king*,” Beldaruit clarified. “Nor do I expect to be waited on by actual kings. I simply expected to be treated as befits my station as a guest and leader of my people. And I am. I do not want for anything.” Really, outside Deanreldy’s personality, the Silver Eve disaster, and Beldaruit’s own health issues, most everything was going well.

“And yet you are unhappy,” Zazamaiya noted, making Beldaruit reach for something to eat in order to hide his discomfort. “My husband has noted it. Healing the body involves healing the mind as well, and the guards talk of your arguments.”

Beldaruit kept his expression schooled. He wasn’t surprised Zazamaiya had heard of such things. And he dreaded to think of what the guards heard in halls like this, especially when silencing spells were useless. “We do not fight if we can avoid it.” Beldaruit could only imagine the visiting nurses – whose numbers increased since his injury – and guards gossiping of discord between the king and the witches… Deanreldy’s demonstration before the public was already far too much, and the guards could take the gossip back to their families, to people who hadn’t seen their king kneeling or already heard of it, or who had and were coming to terrible conclusions about it…

Zazamaiya’s smile grew a little darker. “But do you want to avoid it? A powerful witch caged and at the mercy of a king? And a king, humbled even more by his inability to save his people. That is liable to lead to difficulty.”

Beldaruit didn’t appreciate the comparison. “I am not *caged*.” He had less freedom without his Sealchair, but he could always get someone to help him if needed. “And your husband only visits briefly. And we are cordial enough. We do not… take out our anger on each other.” At least Beldaruit hoped he wasn’t. Much, anyway. Any issues he had with Deanreldy were earned.

“You seldom leave your rooms, o Wise One,” Zazamaiya continued, unperturbed. “Yet you helped defeat such an enemy for us. Saved many lives. And my husband, in his own words, did comparatively little. It’s made him uneasy.”

“He was indispensable to the other doctors, I’m told,” Beldaruit noted. Beldaruit certainly had no such knowledge. He could supply a contraption to aid the doctors in their work, but the life-saving medical acts that magic offered were only brief. The doctors had to do the real work themselves. Deanreldy among them.

Zazamaiya nodded, though her expression was a bit sad. “If only he could be content with that.”

If only, Beldaruit agreed, thinking of how Deanreldy pushed against the cage of the magicless world, like a pacing lion. “I am not unhappy. I enjoy your hospitality. I miss my home of course, but do not most people when far from theirs?”

Zazamaiya inclined her head rather than replying. As Beldaruit ate a small sandwich, Zazamaiya continued, “Then I return your question to you, o Wise One: does my husband’s care frustrate you?”

Beldaruit finished chewing before he replied, “Our situation is a complicated one, and I think that makes things more difficult than they would otherwise be. Your husband is clearly a well-trained doctor. The best I’ve ever seen, and perhaps the world has ever seen. His care is thus unparalleled. He is…” He frowned, looking for the proper explanation. And his mind went back to gentle hands. Intense eyes. That damn open shirt the man always wore, even in the colder days. “Thoughtful.”

“Your comfort is ever on his mind,” Zazamaiya said. “Though if you ever need support if he goes too far, while I’m sure you can stand for yourself, you need only ask. I am more experienced with him.”

Does she want me to place trust in her so I’ll reveal more of our plans? Beldaruit thought as he inclined his head. *Or perhaps talk about magic, given her husband has failed at such endeavors?* It was unnerving to always be on guard like this, even as he ate. Usually, he was with his peers or children who would talk about their learning. “I appreciate the thought, Your Majesty.”

“It’s interesting, though,” Zazamaiya continued as she rolled some shelled nuts in her fingers. “Here I thought you’d be telling me that his flirting is irritating.”

Beldaruit blinked at her for a bit. And then asked, “Apologies, Your Majesty, I think I misheard you…?”

“I thought you might complain about his flirting,” Zazamaiya said. “He can be rather persistent when he’s found someone of interest, I’m afraid. But if you want him to stop, he’ll do so.”

“Flirting?” Beldaruit asked, still feeling like he was missing something. “He’s… *flirting* with me?”

Zazamaiya raised her eyebrows in surprise. “I’m told as much. Certainly he talks about you enough when he’s with me.”

“Well, that’s… I’m a visitor, that’s all!” *There’s no way Deanreldy Ezrest is* flirting *with me!* He assumed the guards and visiting nurses were discussing potential hostilities, not… *that*.

“It wouldn’t be the first time,” Zazamaiya said with a chuckle, which alarmed Beldaruit.

“But he is your husband!” Beldaruit said. This was a part of Deanreldy’s life that Beldaruit had never been informed of.

“He is a *king*,” Zazamaiya replied, dryly. “And I am *extremely* pregnant. And not given to enjoy certain activities when I am in such a way, unfortunately. At least not every day. I do not mind if he has a dalliance every now and then so that I can be left in peace. Besides, it always makes him so *fun* afterward.” There was an odd gleam in her eye. “He learns things from different people he can bring back to *our* bed.”

Beldaruit was having trouble keeping his expression under control. He had no idea *what* to say, other than Lagrah would probably be angry, and Vinanna would probably laugh. Telling a pregnant monarch such topics were likely inappropriate seemed ridiculous. And, *I know pregnant people who enjoy their partner’s attentions plenty during pregnancy*, was *definitely* not a suitable response in the moment, especially given Zazamaiya apparently counted among their number. And going over every interaction Beldaruit had with Deanreldy and thinking of the moments Deanreldy leaned in too close or his dark eyes lingered or…

What in the world am I doing? Beldaruit wondered in desperation.

“If you have no interest,” Zazamaiya continued in the silence, “it is truly no burden. You may tell him to stop, or I will do so on your behalf. He does not intend to *badger* you to gain entry to your bed.”

Beldaruit wondered if he was meant to politely ask her to refuse Deanreldy on his behalf. Or if he really should just do it on his own. Zazamaiya and Deanreldy could use this somehow. Because of *course* Beldaruit would turn Deanreldy down if Deanreldy was seriously attempting this. It was the only *proper* response.

It was not that Beldaruit felt it *impossible* for someone like Deanreldy to take an interest in Beldaruit, even ignoring all their arguments in the past. It wasn’t like Beldaruit had been of accord with all his partners on all matters, though generally they shared more than Beldaruit and Deanreldy did, even outside magic. It was more a matter of how inappropriate the whole idea was. Deanreldy tying himself even more closely to the witches was dangerous, even temporarily. Both Beldaruit and Deanreldy had much at risk from such an interaction.

Is it another attempt to learn more about us or catch us on the back foot? Beldaruit wondered, desperately. Supposing Beldaruit said yes, Deanreldy could claim witches were corrupt, lust-obsessed fiends or something… Lagrah would cry at the danger, either way: accepting to see what Deanreldy was up to, or rejection because it was appropriate… And either way, being *stuck* in such a position…

“I… thank you, for your advice, Your Majesty,” Beldaruit said, with another forced smile. “I shall discuss things with your husband, to clear up the confusion.” How he’d do so was

anyone's guess. "I meant nothing untoward in our relations." Though he wasn't sure, given Zazamaiya's comments, if she would have minded, given the circumstances.

Zazamaiya gave him a complicated look. Then she nodded and said, "Very well."

Beldaruit breathed in deeply before looking back at his plate, which was at least partially full, though he'd barely touched anything, and not just because it was harder to eat with only one hand.

"If you don't mind a perhaps impertinent question," Zazamaiya continued, "do you have experience in these matters? I know that witches are hardly celibate, but your manner seems a bit unnerved." She smiled. "The way we do things in Ezrest may be a bit overwhelming, and I do not wish you to be overwhelmed."

Beldaruit breathed in deeply to ground himself before saying, "I have plenty of experience in such matters, Your Majesty, thank you. The Great Hall is not like Ezrest in many ways, but dalliances are not uncommon." Certainly apprentices got up to all kinds of things. And families living close to each other, and essentially on top of each other, had close ties for many reasons. "It is more that I do not want to start a political incident over this, of all things." He had other headaches to contend with.

"You would not be doing so," Zazamaiya seemingly attempted to reassure him. "My husband is discreet in *that* at least. Whatever you decide." After a moment of consideration, she added, "He likes people, genuinely. Learning about them, appreciating them… in every way." She winked at him conspiratorially.

Beldaruit wondered if he shouldn't have just stayed in his room and called for Riliphin. *That* felt a great deal easier than listening to a queen proposition Beldaruit for her husband. "Thank you, Your Majesty. That is good to know." He knew he was going to have to talk to Deanreldy about this to some degree, and clear things up. Assuming Zazamaiya was not setting this whole thing up to embarrass him. But it was quite the prank if so.

What in the world will I even say? He wondered again as they moved on to thankfully *normal* small talk about other matters. *Assuming this isn't some joke… How does one turn down a man like Deanreldy Ezrest?*

The city was quiet that night, and the castle, despite its lack of magic, was still kept warm. Beldaruit had plenty of blankets, and they were suitably comfortable. Deanreldy had kept his word and ensured he had more comfortable bedding to help with his bedsores.

Sleeping with the splint was irritating. Beldaruit was used to moving himself around or keeping parts of himself in place, but the splint was another thing he had to worry about.

And this night he was even more restless than usual.

After eating with Zazamaiya – where she discussed her own son's education and asked if the Wise in Teachings had any non-magical suggestions, just out of curiosity – he returned to his rooms, where Riliphin was waiting with more books for his own study. Beldaruit buried

himself in that, focusing on his apprentice. On sane matters, not… whatever was going on with Ezrest's strange king.

"Prince Eoleo is very… friendly," Riliphin commented at one point. He sat in a chair and was holding his notebook, where he'd been practicing writing spells and recitation for Beldaruit to review.

"Oh?" Beldaruit asked with a smile. "Is that where you've been vanishing off to these days?" He hadn't exactly forced Riliphin to stay cloistered with him. And the boy had been taking more time to himself, rather than hiding from the world. Beldaruit only wanted to encourage it, even as he missed the young man's company.

Riliphin's cheeks reddened, and Beldaruit was hopeful about the child making friends, but as Beldaruit had seen from Eoleo's parents, perhaps he should have picked *other* acquaintances. Less dangerous ones.

"We talk sometimes," Riliphin said, nervously. "About his studies and the kingdom. He's not been allowed out much since the Silver Eve disaster, so I think he's a bit bored…"

"So long as you are careful," Beldaruit said. "Eoleo is nobility and will take over his father's throne one day, should nothing adverse happen to him or the throne before then, but he is also an outsider. And just as likely to take up his father's art." *And bored nobility apparently get up to nonsense, if Eoleo's mother is correct…*

"He is very intelligent already," Riliphin noted. "For one so young. He feels more like a small politician than anything else."

"The nobles start their children off early," Beldaruit said, wryly. "Princes more so than others." He imagined, with parents like Deanreldy and Zazamaiya, a child would have a *lot* to handle. "You will one day have to deal more with noble patrons, Riliphin, so this will be good practice." Beldaruit supposed the interaction, risky as it was, had its uses. Certainly, dealing with Coco had taught Deanreldy much about his own outlook on the world and magic's place in it. "A precocious prince will become a precocious king, no doubt."

Riliphin looked nervous, then. "I-I shall do my best, Lord Beldaruit. I will not disappoint you."

"I know you won't, Riliphin," Beldaruit said, warmly, not wanting the boy to think Beldaruit was looking for him to fail. Friendship was not meant to be a test. "I'm glad to see you opening up. But feel no rush. We are not here for you to practice such things. When the city is more cleaned up and my arm is healed, we will return to the Great Hall." *And hopefully things will be better.*

Talking with Riliphin had helped for a time. But the boy had to leave eventually after they ate dinner. And then Beldaruit was alone again. He could see starlight from his window, but he could not summon anything in his idleness. And he'd left all his good pipes at home. The sheets were also comfortable, he was quite warm, but there was still a slight itch to his body. Not of pain, but… something else.

The itch didn’t seem to just be from missing his own bed, or a lack of familiarity with a borrowed one. He’d been here enough nights by now that this place was familiar. The bed was large and well-made. He had plenty of room even for his tall body.

But it was suffocating, too. All the blankets, the sea of comfort… And just him, wherever he looked.

Beldaruit breathed in deeply, staring up at the dark. *Is it loneliness in the end, really?* He hadn’t bedded anyone in months, and was fine with that. But suddenly he was in a different place and everything changed… Why? He was content!

He thought of a bright smile and powerful hands made gentle. A sharp laugh and a proud voice.

Foolish, he thought, miserably, as he shut his eyes. *Absolute foolishness.*

Phantom whispers filled his ears, and he thought of those hands on him. Promises of more.

“Control masquerading as a helping hand,” Deanreldy had said. He’d been so close, Beldaruit could smell whatever Deanreldy used to clean his hair. And in that moment, Beldaruit knew that Deanreldy wanted control of *Beldaruit*. Somehow. At the time, it had been dangerous, and purely about power, and obtaining magic. Far too dangerous. It still was, really, even with Zazamaiya’s *permission* or invitation or whatever the lunch was meant to be… Deanreldy’s interest of any kind could only be worrying. And there were so many eyes on them.

But in the dark, with no one to watch, Beldaruit thought of *other* forms of control. Of bodies moving together. Lips in tender places. Hands everywhere.

He reached down under his robes, feeling his own interest, and his face burned. *Damn it. What am I doing?*

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

At the sound of the knock on the door, Beldaruit lowered the papers Lagrah had him looking through in bed, while Lagrah sat in a chair nearby for occasional discussion. Shortly, they heard the announcement that King Deanreldy was coming to visit.

It had been nearly a day since the meal with Zazamaiya, and Beldaruit was still unsure how to go about whatever he was planning to do. He'd spoken with Lagrah earlier to ask if the king was known to play around, just to try and reassure himself Zazamaiya wasn't entirely pranking him.

Lagrah had been surprised and said that such a thing hadn't come up in his research. "King Deanreldy is beloved generally, and his love of his wife is well-known. I have not heard much else."

"I see," Beldaruit had replied. *Well, that answers nothing.* It was possible that Deanreldy only took lovers of high rank, and they kept silent about it, after all. And the nobles would be suspicious of a witch asking questions about such things: after all, what were the witches hoping to gain with such information?

Beldaruit had reassured Lagrah when Lagrah had wondered why *Beldaruit* was asking such a question: "I simply heard something that might be of some concern… But I'll let you know if I hear more. That's all."

Deanreldy arrived bright and bushy tailed as usual, smiling at Beldaruit like a man ready to devour food, and Beldaruit realized that Zazamaiya likely *wasn't* playing a game. And he wondered why he hadn't noticed this particular aspect of the king from the outset.

Probably because the idea is preposterous, Beldaruit thought as Deanreldy greeted him and walked around the bed. The indiscretion had used to exhaust himself to sleep felt carved on his skin, even as he'd done his best to clean up the evidence afterward. It was one thing to imagine a past lover or even one made purely of dream when he took his body in hand… but a king? A king Beldaruit had to *work with?* A king who was, hypothetically, *flirting* with Beldaruit already?

"Another check-up, Your Majesty?" Beldaruit asked, curtly. "I have not suddenly fallen ill." He wondered if Zazamaiya made some comment about his own eating habits at their lunch… Beldaruit had neither over nor undereaten. He'd done his best to be polite.

"I am monitoring your recovery, o Wise One," Deanreldy said with that warm smirk. "I have been told you wish to depart as soon as possible, and the sooner you are healed, the sooner you may do so."

Beldaruit recalled his comments about missing home, and imagined Zazamaiya had said something after all. This then made him wonder even more about the *rest* of her comments to him. And Deanreldy's bright gaze confirmed nothing at all.

Of course Deanreldy's weren't the only eyes that Beldaruit worried over.

"Lagrah," Beldaruit said. "We can talk later. I'll let you know when I'm free."

"Of course," Lagrah said with a nod. He nodded to Deanreldy before departing, leaving the two other men alone.

"Just us again, then," Deanreldy said as he sat on the bed and held out his hand for Beldaruit's arm.

Beldaruit carefully moved to allow him access. And there was a noted difference from before - Deanreldy was fully gentle this time.

"At least it's healing," Deanreldy said.

Beldaruit breathed a sigh of relief. The sooner he could leave this place and not have to worry about its politics and *monarch*, the better…

Deanreldy didn't let go of Beldaruit's arm, though. "You had lunch with my Queen yesterday. Was it enjoyable?"

Beldaruit knew that Deanreldy felt him tense. But he forced a smile anyway. "Yes. She is a lovely, vibrant woman. And she told me much of your city that I had not known." Beldaruit hadn't explored all that much since he arrived in Ezrest, even during the disaster. Zazamaiya talked about the city's history and its people in ways Beldaruit enjoyed.

As for the rest, well…

"Good," Deanreldy said as he carefully lowered Beldaruit's arm and then let go.

Beldaruit's arm felt cold afterward and he hated the thought. He had been *just fine* when no one was holding his arm *before* Deanreldy walked over.

"The city's recovery is going well," Deanreldy said. "And we are trying to ensure resources are spread to everyone who needs it, though the nobles are averse to sharing their luxury and those of the Muckpool are averse to trusting my people." He smiled grimly. "Entitlement on the one hand and old wounds on the other. It is hard to overcome, but I have good people trying. And some of your witches, too."

Beldaruit had the reports from Lagrah. The witches had to be careful, but efforts were being made to help wherever they could. The city was being treated like the site of a natural disaster, so there was some leniency.

"The city will hopefully return to some form of normalcy soon," Deanreldy continued. "Like magic fading in the dark of night, for a new day."

“A depressing image,” Beldaruit commented. He loved living around magic, and thinking of it vanishing was distasteful.

Deanreldy smiled and said, “Indeed. But to those of us without, such is how it is.”

Beldaruit grimaced, thinking this talk wasn’t useful, and then said, “Your wife made some comments that… I am unsure how to deal with.” There was no sense in avoiding it forever.

“Oh?” Deanreldy asked. There might have been a glint of interest in his eyes.

“I mean no insult,” Beldaruit said, cautiously. “And truly she was the embodiment of kindness. But she said…” He was still unsure how to explain it. Especially to Deanreldy himself.

Deanreldy was unhelpful, unmoving as he was.

“She said you had interest in… me,” Beldaruit finally blurted out. He glanced at the door, which was thankfully clear of anyone else.

Deanreldy seemed unfazed by this. He replied, with a gentle smile, “That is correct.”

Beldaruit blinked at him, wondering if everyone in the castle had gone mad. “I mean in a non-medical or political context.” Of course Deanreldy had *some* interest in Beldaruit outside physicality, given he was *here.*

But… more?

Deanreldy merely smiled at him, apparently confirming it all.

Beldaruit’s face warmed. “That… Why?”

“Why not?” Deanreldy replied. “You are an attractive and interesting man, and a powerful one. There are many reasons to find you appealing.”

Then why not romance Lagrah? Beldaruit wondered in irritation. *He has all that and you two don’t argue…*

Deanreldy chuckled and said, “Even your nervousness now is appealing.”

“I am *not* one of your cats!” Beldaruit said, not bothering to mask his irritation. “And I am trying to approach this with an awareness of the situation we are in. And would you please… shut the door?”

Deanreldy stood up and walked over to the doorway, shutting it and putting a lock down, before walking back to the bed.

The room seemed so much quieter with just them in it.

“We are alone,” Deanreldy said as he sat back on the bed, perhaps slightly closer this time. He smirked then, as if he’d won something.

“I simply do not want more gossip to spread than already has,” Beldaruit said, snippily.

Deanreldy shrugged and replied, “My people already know I spend a great deal of time here. I’m sure whatever is in their imagination is far messier than anything we could actually do ourselves. People gossip in an enclosed space. And gossip travels.”

“Yes,” Beldaruit said. “I am aware.” He’d heard quite the amount of gossip over his years in the Great Hall.

“So you have me here,” Deanreldy said with a smirk. “And what is your next move, considering all this? Because I find it hard to believe you’d want the door closed for a rejection.”

“You’re so obnoxious,” Beldaruit muttered. “And you think it charm.”

“But you bristle so cutely,” Deanreldy teased. “I cannot help myself.”

Cat owner, Beldaruit thought, mutinously, even as his cheeks heated over being called *cute*. But he didn’t have an answer to the clear offer on the bed before them. He assumed he’d say no somehow. But the words dried on his tongue. Instead he asked, “But our arguments? We clearly do not get along.” Deanreldy was a fierce debater at the best of times.

“We worked together during Silver Eve, did we not?” Deanreldy pointed out with a smile. “Despite our ongoing issues, clearly when we work together, we can do marvelous things.” The implication there was heavy.

Beldaruit still felt unsure. Saving a city was different than intermingling their affairs even more than they already were.

Deanreldy watched him with those bright eyes, and then leaned forward to pluck at Beldaruit’s long hair with his own careful fingers. “O Wise One, the things we could do if you said *yes*.” He raised the loop of silver hair in his fingers to his lips, and gently kissed it.

Beldaruit had a full body shudder, and not in distaste. He could feel the heat of Deanreldy’s breath, the way the bed molded to the man… And Beldaruit didn’t know how to turn at all, whether towards Deanreldy or away. He felt caught by the small connection between them. And he was unsure whether he should demand release or not. It was like he’d spoken with Lagrah before: Deanreldy drew you in. And clearly, Deanreldy meant to keep what he collected.

“We treat you here,” Deanreldy said, unbothered by Beldaruit’s reaction, “but not all of you. And I would rather do that, if I could.” His right hand moved along the bedspread towards Beldaruit’s right knee, without touching Beldaruit’s body.

“And I’m meant to trust you?” Beldaruit asked, a bit hoarsely. “After that display in front of your people? In front of the world?” He only realized, belatedly, that this most *definitely* wasn’t a *no.* And Deanreldy, smart as he was, had definitely noticed.

“I knelt before *you*,” Deanreldy said, his voice deeper now. “Not anyone else. Not the world.” He leaned forward, and Beldaruit refused to back away. He was not a coward. “Only you, o Wise One.”

When Deanreldy’s lips touched Beldaruit’s, they were soft, and tasted faintly of some fruity substance the king must have used to keep them wet. Or perhaps whatever he’d drunk last. Beldaruit’s heart raced. He’d been kissed many a time before, but it had been a while. And he found he missed it. He shut his eyes and relaxed as much as he could, enjoying the kiss for what it was, and deciding he’d save his regrets for another time.

A warm hand reached up to card fingers through Beldaruit’s long hair near his ears. A gentle push pressed against Beldaruit’s chest, pushing him further against the pillows onto his back. Deanreldy’s long hair fell around them both, and those gentle fingers never left.

Beldaruit reached up to rest his left hand on Deanreldy’s back. He could feel the way the man’s muscles flexed over him. And Beldaruit’s own dreams of how the man looked fully shirtless came to mind. Seeming him kneeling, knowing it was for *Beldaruit* in particular…

When Deanreldy’s fingers finally moved, they began undoing Beldaruit’s robe, pushing the lapels aside so that when Deanreldy finally moved his lips to allow Beldaruit to breathe, those lips moved down to Beldaruit’s neck and skin, sucking and licking his way down.

“You like the smell of your own medicine?” Beldaruit asked, still with his eyes closed as Deanreldy’s lips kept moving. His nurses had been applying what they could of Deanreldy’s medicine to Beldaruit’s still troubled back. The smell had to be worse nearer his chest.

“I like the perfume you put have on your clothes,” Deanreldy replied as he sat up and grinned, like a, well… contented cat.

“I hope you don’t treat *all* your patients this way,” Beldaruit muttered, only imagining under what circumstances Deanreldy made his other conquests. Though he supposed there was chance enough at balls and weddings and the like.

“Just you,” Deanreldy said as he leaned back to pull up Beldaruit’s robe over his legs.

“What are you doing?” Beldaruit asked, confused. The air was cold against his lower body.

“I can’t imagine anyone’s been around to pleasure you while you’ve been here,” Deanreldy replied as he reached up to tug Beldaruit’s undergarments aside. “And that seems an injustice to me.”

“I can *manage*,” Beldaruit protested, recalling how poorly he’d managed the previous evening. “I *have* managed, thank you very much.”

Deanreldy looked up at him with a burning gaze, and Beldaruit felt it in his entire body, somehow. And then Deanreldy smiled and said, “Good. But I also wish to taste you.”

Beldaruit’s lips parted, but not before Deanreldy ducked down and wrapped his lips around Beldaruit’s cock.

Beldaruit pressed his head back into the pillows, and he gasped as Deanreldy swallowed more. Deanreldy's position didn't look comfortable, bent over Beldaruit as he was, but he didn't protest, and gently bobbed his head up and down Beldaruit's cock, filling the air with wet sucking sounds.

"Your… Your…" Beldaruit reached out to grasp Deanreldy's blonde hair, needing balance. Truly, it *had* been too long. And Beldaruit's last partner preferred hand jobs more than anything else. Not that Beldaruit ever pushed for this, but… it was nice, all the same.

Beldaruit put a hand over his mouth, not wanting to attract the guards with his moaning. Pleasure was slow but sharp as it worked through his torso, and he felt hot from where his robe rested in extra layers over his skin.

Deanreldy's tongue was a wicked thing, working Beldaruit over, and those lips… Practiced at argument, and equally at this, apparently. Deanreldy's nose occasionally bumped the pale hairs at the base of Beldaruit's cock, before moving back up and lathering attention on the glans, making Beldaruit bite his own lip. Deanreldy's hands gently pressed against Beldaruit's bare hips, massaging the skin there and sometimes along Beldaruit's back, sending flashes of tickling surprise through Beldaruit's body. Beldaruit was not a huge man, but a human mouth was only so large, and Deanreldy's lips were sometimes visible, stretched around Beldaruit's cock.

Beldaruit imagined talking to Deanreldy after this and his face burned, making him squeeze Deanreldy's blonde hair even harder. Not to tug him in any particular direction, but to hold on, lest he collapse. He only pulled back his hand from his lips to hiss, "I'm going to come soon, Your Majesty, you should… You should move!"

Deanreldy hummed happily around Beldaruit's cock, but did not move away. If he heard, which he seemingly did, he didn't care.

Beldaruit murmured, more desperately, "Your… Ah!!!" He shut his eyes as he came, and swirls and bursts of pleasure went through him. He had to work to keep his right arm still, and there was a slight pain in his hips, but it was nothing in the wake of his release.

Deanreldy swallowed it all, and only pulled off of Beldaruit's cock a while later, wiping his lips with a satisfied smile as he looked up at Beldaruit. "Now *that* is a handsome face…"

Beldaruit didn't want to imagine how he looked in the moment as his chest worked for air. His hair was also likely a mess and he'd drooled on his fingers.

He was hardly a wise *anything*, though he'd certainly learned something… if he could figure out what. That those lips were powerful in more ways than discussion? That Beldaruit truly didn't want those fingers to leave him, and Deanreldy seemed aware of this to some extent, because those hands were still *on* Beldaruit.

Beldaruit cleared his throat and tried to master himself before finally saying, "Thank you. For that." He looked away, feeling embarrassed. "It *has* unfortunately been a while." And Beldaruit, damn him, didn't regret it, either. The excursion had only made his own interest worse.

“A shame,” Deanreldy said. “But it is my boon to enjoy.” He leaned in closer. “And if you’ll permit me, o Wise One, I intend to *indulge*.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Beldaruit?” Lagrah asked as he looked up from the report he’d been reviewing. “Is something wrong?”

Beldaruit, who was sitting up in bed and had been unknowingly gazing blankly at his own ankles rather than his own stack of papers, blinked and then looked at Lagrah, who gazed back at him in concern. Beldaruit smiled and said, “Of course not. Apologies, I must just be a bit overtired. I didn’t mean to zone off.”

After Beldaruit’s little tryst with Deanreldy, the man had cleaned them both and set off for his other duties. And Beldaruit had gathered himself before calling Lagrah back to discuss the ongoing witch departures from Ezrest.

Lagrah gave Beldaruit an odd look before saying, “It’s not like you.” Thought he’d only been the Wise in Friendship for a short while, he had known Beldaruit for some years. It was part of why Beldaruit and Vinanna had agreed to the promotion once Engendale’s corruption had been discovered: they both knew Lagrah was not only experienced, but could also be trusted.

“Being stuck here has changed things,” Beldaruit said gravely as he settled back against the pillows. It was not even a lie, given the events of Silver Eve and what he’d done with that medical use contraption... But in his own distraction, he was making things even more bothersome for Lagrah. “I apologize for this difficult introduction to your duties. I’ve hardly helped.”

“You’ve been a good teacher, as is expected of your role,” Lagrah said with a soft smile. “I forgot to respect your own difficulties. And many witches are dealing with the mess from Silver Eve, even if it’s just those Easthies got hold of first, before Coco and Tartah knocked him out.”

“A mess we’ll have to deal with in the future,” Beldaruit replied, bitterly. They’d already spoken to Vinanna about it. Her memory was missing, but talking with Lagrah and Beldaruit had helped clear things up. She was a fighter. Losing a day’s worth of memories was infuriating, but did not keep her from returning promptly to work. Vinanna had been suspicious of the changes instituted while she was unconscious, but she trusted Lagrah and Beldaruit’s judgment well enough, and her own past self. And would get back to their allowance for the use of the counterlock spell after she got the Knights Moralis in order.

“Thankfully one *Vinanna* is happy to address,” Lagrah said with a soft sigh of relief.

Beldaruit thought back to Easthies’ desperation. His fury of breaking the principles. And what Luluci had described to the three Wise as fear.

“I am not unsympathetic,” Beldaruit said. “Certainly what Deanreldy did when he knelt…”

To you, Deanreldy’s voice whispered in his ear.

Beldaruit’s cheeks warmed. *Well, at least I’m not attacking people over it.* Things got difficult for a while, and he argued with Deanreldy, and likely would do so even more once night came, but Beldaruit also listened to people… “We are living in interesting, complex times that require adjustment to the moment.” He doubted Lagrah would agree that Beldaruit’s manner of doing so was proper, but it wasn’t sparking any issues politically, so Beldaruit kept silent.

“Yes,” Lagrah said. “Thankfully the new generations are looking good for that.”

Beldaruit knew that Lagrah meant Coco, but Beldaruit’s traitor mind for many reasons went right back to Deanreldy. *I cannot do my duties this way. It’s dangerous. It’s…*

It felt good. And Beldaruit, like a starving man, wanted more, damn him. And yet he had the gall to be exasperated with *Easthies*.

Sleeping with a king is not the same as wiping the memory of the masses while a monster threatens to destroy a city and more, besides, Beldaruit thought. He rubbed his fingertips idly against each other. *But…*

Beldaruit grimaced and said, “Lagrah… I have something else we need to discuss.”

Lagrah looked at him patiently. Perhaps too patiently.

“…Perhaps you should shut the door, first,” Beldaruit added.

Deanreldy was still smiling as he ate dinner in Beldaruit’s chambers. When Beldaruit had said the guards would talk, Deanreldy had shrugged and said they always did. But that Deanreldy also wanted to ensure his patient’s diet was well managed, and hadn’t had free time until dinner to do so.

He was merely being a good doctor. That was all. And staying later than usual wouldn’t be thought of twice in such circumstances.

Beldaruit stubbornly focused on his meal, set out in a neat tray over his lap in the bed, though it was difficult to focus with those eyes on him. He’d eaten with bedmates before, so the experience was hardly unique. But it was a new thing between him and *Deanreldy*. And Beldaruit kept thinking of those hands on him. Deareldy’s mouth around him. It hadn’t been all that long ago, after all.

He then wondered if the man was doing this just to see Beldaruit squirm. Certainly, that happened enough these days.

“You have a piercing gaze, Your Majesty,” Beldaruit commented at one point. “I’m not sure I will survive it.”

“You’ve survived worse,” Deanreldy noted. “And I know you will survive me.”

Beldaruit’s face warmed at what that might mean.

“Though I *do* wish you’d call me Dean,” Deanreldy joked.

Beldaruit still found it amusing the man was willing to – even in play – surrender some of his control. His title was the simplest form of that control. “And what would you call me?” If they were to play this game, Beldaruit wished to know as much about the rules as possible.

“What is it you wish me to call you, o Wise One?” Deanreldy asked with a heated look.

The last thing I am at the moment is wise, Beldaruit thought, miserably. “I suppose my name is suitable. In private.” *Vinanna will kill me for this. I’m lucky Lagrah was little more than surprised and a bit confused.*

“Beldaruit, then,” Deanreldy said. He sounded it out slowly, as if testing it.

Beldaruit was regretting this already. It was too much of a surrender. But using his title in the bedroom just felt like a slap: a reminder of all that was he doing wrong here, even if both Zazamaiya and Deanreldy saw no apparent issue.

“You seemed happier when I came in,” Lagrah had commented after Beldaruit had awkwardly explained things. *“It made your lapse confusing. But I suppose this is why?”*

Happy, Beldaruit thought with frustration as he watched Deanreldy focus on his own meal, using those careful fingers and delicate mouth to work away. *I barely know this man and also know him too well. A blow job, even a good one, isn’t enough to change much.*

Eventually, they put the plates aside, with Deanreldy moving Beldaruit’s tray from the bed. He then began disrobing, and Beldaruit followed suit, setting his clothes aside.

Beldaruit was used to disrobing before medical staff, and had already done so a number of times before Deanreldy, but this wasn’t for a medical examination. And Deanreldy hadn’t fully explained how he meant to *indulge*. A night together held many opportunities.

When they were both naked before each other, Beldaruit could properly admire the younger man. He was little different nude, just with more musculature on display, and no scarring that Beldaruit could see. He did not cower, and gazed back at Beldaruit with a bit of satisfaction. *This is what you denied yourself by playing coy,* he seemed to be saying.

It’s not like I knew this is what he wanted! Beldaruit thought with some annoyance.

Deanreldy crawled over the bed to be close, and rested his hands on Beldaruit’s hips to gently massage the skin there. “Do you have any desires this evening, Beldaruit?”

The use of his name made Beldaruit shiver, and distracted him from any particular thoughts. Everything was blank. He thought he’d embarrass himself if he tried to return the favor from earlier, just now, and he had left the things he liked to use with partners at home, while

Deanreldy had come to Beldaruit's chambers empty handed. But Beldaruit still felt like something was owed.

"I wish…" Beldaruit began. He grimaced. "I wish you to enjoy yourself. To… To indulge." He wanted to see what this man wanted, rather than revealing more of himself.

Deanreldy's smile deepened. It seemed to be the answer he wanted. "I wish to fuck you, Beldaruit. To hear more of those sounds you bit back earlier."

Beldaruit's face warmed. The language didn't bother him, though it was odd from someone who ordinarily used such refined speech. *Perhaps his hunger overcomes his etiquette?*

Deanreldy leaned close, so that his lips nearly brushed Beldaruit's cheek. "Is this satisfactory?"

Beldaruit wondered how much simply making one of the most powerful witches uncertain was part of the greater appeal here, but nodded.

Deanreldy leaned forward to breathe warm air on Beldaruit's ear. "It might be easier if you lay on your stomach. Do you have a preference?"

"My back," Beldaruit replied. "I wish to see you." He'd already shown his back to Deanreldy plenty. But like this… he didn't want anything hidden if it could be avoided.

Deanreldy nodded and then leaned forward to kiss Beldaruit's neck.

Beldaruit tilted his head, allowing Deanreldy more access. The man seemed rather hungry for this kind of thing.

"As we traveled through the city," Deanreldy murmured against him. "I couldn't help but see your figure before me, and wonder what it would be like to reach forward and pull your hair back again, but for something tender rather than professional."

Even then? Beldaruit thought with some embarrassment. *Though at least I'm not the only one who's thought of that bizarre jaunt on my Sealchair…*

Deanreldy snuffled his nose over Beldaruit's neck and down the older man's chest. "You have so many faces I've seen: thoughtful, anxious, angry, enlivened… I wished to see more." Deanreldy looked up at Beldaruit with an odd light in his eyes. "To see you look at me with wonder. Even pleasure. A man with no magic awing one with it all is a feat."

Beldaruit was surprised by such an admission. "I am merely one witch, Your… *Dean*. I am not worthy of such…" He wasn't sure what to say.

Deanreldy smiled softly, almost bitterly. "I am aware witches are not *gods*. You struggled much that night. And were it easier to do what you did, or do more, I imagine you'd have done it, for your own sakes, if no one else's."

Beldaruit frowned at that. Pact or no, they wouldn't have left the city to suffer.

“I do still envy your capabilities,” Deanreldy said. “Sealchairs, windowways, turning back time on a monster to heal…” He reached out for Beldaruit’s left hand and clasped the man’s fingers, before bringing them to his lips for a gentle kiss. “It is all amazement.”

Beldaruit smiled as he replied, “Magic is wondrous. When used for the greater good.”

He thought of Lagrah, raising concerns about this relationship. And what would happen if things went badly. *“You were the one who spoke of being a ‘model of rectitude’ and there being no room for ‘impropriety’, Beldaruit.”*

“And do you view healing as *not* the greater good?” Deanreldy asked as he carefully set Beldaruit’s hand down.

“Does speaking of things this way bring you happiness?” Beldaruit asked in reply. “I am already at your mercy, and being at crosshairs with you in bed is not precisely a delight to me.”

Deanreldy smiled and said, “Then let us see you more comfortable.”

Beldaruit was grateful. He didn’t want to think more about how much he’d already put aside during his time in Ezrest.

What followed was a bit of time spent while Deanreldy pulled out and rearranged a great number of pillows – some from a nearby closet that had been added to the room recently – to better prepare the bed. Deanreldy’s lower half was propped up comfortably, and his upper half raised enough so he could see. This was accompanied with soothing touches and kisses to Beldaruit’s shoulders, his right side, his belly button… It was an overwhelming amount of touch that Beldaruit almost didn’t realize he was on full display before the king when the man crouched between Beldaruit’s legs.

Deanreldy held a glass vial that he uncorked, pouring the contents onto his hands.

Beldaruit clutched the soft pillows around him, wondering if impatience would win out, but when Deanreldy pressed his fingers to Beldaruit’s entrance, the touch was light and gentle, as all of Deanreldy’s movements were.

“Let me know if your arm pains you,” Deanreldy said as he circled his finger against Beldaruit’s rim. “Sometimes, pleasure spikes in the oddest of places.”

We’re not at the pleasure stage of this yet, Beldaruit wanted to say. But then Deanreldy was pressing a fingertip *inside* Beldaruit’s body, and Beldaruit breathed in. It was barely anything, but it had been a while, and Beldaruit was painfully aware just *who* was touching him in that space.

“No spikes yet,” Beldaruit commented, still. If the man expected to overwhelm Beldaruit with simple touches, he was mistaken.

Deanreldy smiled and pressed deeper.

Beldaruit recalled the shape of the man's fingers as they worked over his back, and touched the rest of his body. There were others with more graceful fingers, but Deanreldy's were thin and elegant enough. Rough with use from his work, not so dissimilar from a witch's with their ink and pens.

Deanreldy reached out with his left hand and grasped Beldaruit's cock, massaging the shaft. His fingers were wet from oil.

Beldaruit twitched at the sensation, and made a small noise. It was late, and people were likely eating or retiring, perhaps with their own bedmates. The guards were outside, and possibly wondering what was happening. There was no way the door was airtight, though it was far from the bed.

Deanreldy's hands worked, inside and out, making Beldaruit's breathing stutter. He went slowly, methodically, and the pleasure from his fingers stretched to every part of Beldaruit's being, but *not* quite far enough.

It left Beldaruit too much free time to wonder what was waiting at the end of this. The man had said he wanted to *fuck* Beldaruit. And Beldaruit had seen the man's cock. It was not a monstrous thing, but larger than his fingers. And it had been a while since anyone had fucked Beldaruit.

A slight sting made Beldaruit grunt, and Deanreldy said, "Mmm… three might be too much…"

Beldaruit's face burned. *When did he get there?!* Beldaruit hadn't been distracted *that* long…

But Deanreldy kept slowly, almost lazily, working Beldaruit over. Occasionally, he even hummed to himself.

Exasperating as always, Beldaruit thought angrily. *But if he gets something out of this, perhaps it is proper repayment.*

But was that all Beldaruit wanted? Just a repayment? He wanted more in general, but viewing it this way…

The annoying thing was, when Deanreldy had made his wishes clear, Beldaruit had *wanted* that, too.

His impatience grew, even as he was grateful he was less likely to gain more injuries.

Deanreldy withdrew his fingers and returned to the vial, pouring it over his cock. It was somewhat clinical, after all the touching from before, and Beldaruit felt a bit cold without Deanreldy's hands on him.

"You look annoyed," Deanreldy commented eventually. "Am I bothering you?"

"Your hand," Beldaruit said, sharper than intended. "Put it back."

Deanreldy blinked at him in surprise. Then he smiled. “Inside or outside, Beldaruit? Or both?”

“Outside, of course,” Beldaruit ordered. “I want your cock *now*.”

Deanreldy’s grin widened. His hand returned to Beldaruit’s cock, making the older man sigh in pleasure. He grunted when he felt Beldaruit’s cock follow, pushing into Beldaruit’s body. Again, the man moved slowly, with the most patient of thrusts, matching with his hand movements, almost like he was mimicking how he might bring himself off if he held his own cock.

Beldaruit’s breath was tight, and he winced a little as Deanreldy’s cock pressed deeper and deeper inside him. It was not painful, but it was new. And he could almost feel the shape of it as it moved deeper.

“To see you flustered by me and not anything or anyone else,” Deanreldy said as he continued moving. “It is a heady feeling, Beldaruit. No monsters lurking in the dark. Just us two, here, in comfort.”

“You’re not the one with a broken arm,” Beldaruit said as he shut his eyes when a tug from Deanreldy’s hand sent a spark of pleasure through him.

“At least we’re both indulging, then,” Deanreldy replied. “Even if I am the one indulging more. How is your back?”

“Fine,” Beldaruit said. “It… It’s better. You made it better.” It didn’t bother him at all just now. He’d been sleeping on his side more often than late, but even with the gentle motions of Deanreldy’s thrusts pressing him into the pillows and bedspread, there was nothing bothersome. The cushions were enough.

“I’m glad,” Deanreldy said. He pressed even deeper, making Beldaruit moan a little louder before slapping his hand over his mouth. Deanreldy smirked and said, “I wish to hear you.”

Beldaruit shut his eyes. He wanted to say, *It’s still embarrassing*, because Deanreldy was a king and Beldaruit was a Wise and they should *definitely* not be doing this… Were they anyone else, Beldaruit would not bother restraining himself. But were they anyone else, they’d be in the Great Hall…

And Deanreldy would never be there.

There were stories, of course, of the former closeness between witches and their monarchs. Not all of it was political. Some had been relationships of love, romantic and/or physical. Some had gone wrong, but some had, allegedly, been wonderful. Beldaruit had no illusions that this would make the storybooks, and hoped, dearly, that it would remain gossip at most to most anyone else. Two powerful men enjoying an evening wasn’t the stuff of legends.

“Perhaps I should make you make more noise,” Deanreldy said as he quickened his strokes and squeezed a little harder. His thrusts did not grow more intense, but now they were longer,

pressing deep inside Beldaruit, and sent more sparks crashing together into something like a wave.

“Nnng…” Beldaruit murmured. His breath stuttered, and he clutched at his face. A twist of Deanreldy’s hand pushed Beldaruit over the edge and he cried out as he came over the man’s fingers, spilling over his own chest.

“Ah,” Deanreldy groaned in pleasure, “Yes… That…”

“Ahhh,” Beldaruit said, letting his hand drop away from his mouth. He had to work to keep his injured arm still, but thankfully there was no extra pain.

Deanreldy muttered something incomprehensible, and then he was coming hard inside Beldaruit, making the older man jolt in surprise. It was a bit uncomfortable, but not unexpected.

“Such a face should be banned from public viewing,” Deanreldy said, calling Beldaruit’s attention back to him. Deanreldy’s face was blissed out and overtly hungry as he gazed at Beldaruit. “Kingdoms would fall beneath it.”

Beldaruit’s face burned as he gasped. “You exaggerate…”

“I do not,” Deanreldy said. “That I can see it, ahh…” He smiled. “What a wonder.”

Beldaruit at least knew the man wasn’t *entirely* exaggerating. His body clearly took pleasure from all this. And Beldaruit did not have it in him to feign a lack of enjoyment. Beldaruit knew the mechanics of how to make them both enjoy themselves, and Beldaruit was thankful.

“I wonder how many times in one night I can see you make it,” Deanreldy said. “Unless you are overtired already?”

Beldaruit frowned, sensing a challenge. “I am older than you but not *that* old, yet. We went into battle together, and I can stay for more.” He did not know how long he’d be in Ezrest to heal, but if he could have this, for however long it lasted, he would take it. Lagrah and Vinanna would make him fully aware of any consequences in future.

Deanreldy smirked. “Have you seen cats go at it, o Wise of Teachings? It can go quite a while.”

“Would you *stop* comparing me to a cat,” Beldaruit demanded. “And you said you’d use my name, not my title…”

“If you pout so then I must,” Deanreldy said with a chuckle. He leaned down, “Though cats, you know, do not allow for easy taming.”

“I am not looking to be *tamed,*” Beldaruit replied. “Just to be fucked.”

“Then I shall oblige,” Deanreldy said. He moved his lips to Beldaruit’s, and the older man turned his chin to meet the king, feeling the odd angle, the way their bodies were connected

at so many points. The slight shift of Deanreldy’s cock and come still inside Beldaruit’s body.

It was another reminder that though Beldaruit was at Deanreldy’s mercy for some of this, Deanreldy was also at *his*, given the man sought to tease Beldaruit out for this.

I cannot trust him, fully, Beldaruit thought as he shut his eyes. *But we can have this, for now. Let us make each other happy while we can.*

Deanreldy pulled away for breath, but stayed close, leaning his head ever so slightly against Beldaruit’s. He looked young and handsome, the pride of Ezrest.

Beldaruit had made him this way. It *did* feel magical.

Magic is for the greater good, Beldaruit thought. *And witches and kings* did *once mix… Not all to bad ends… And perhaps not all in legends.*

Deanreldy reached up to caress Beldaruit’s cheek.

What end will this lead me to? Beldaruit thought. *A bad one? A good one? Or something in the middle?*

He didn’t know. Neither of them really could.

Beldaruit raised his left hand and pulled Deanreldy’s chin up for another kiss.

But I want it all the same, Beldaruit thought. *I don't need it to be a legend.* He moved his fingers up into Deanreldy's hands, prompted a soft, contented sound from the king's lips. *I just need it to be.*

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading <3 <3 Kudos and comments are love! If you'd like to read more of my work, you can subscribe to the fanfic and/or my author page! My Archive of Our Own page, when it is back up, has my completed archive of work, and will be the first to be updated with new works (usually), so that is the best place to subscribe to me.

Rebloggable on tumblr * Retweetable on twitter * Blue Sky Social

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!