Fictober : Homecoming

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Summary

(testing post this coz Ao3 down

When Fenris comes to Hawke’s mansion, he meets Orana. And there is a kind of shy bonding over Tevene commonality. This is roughly sometime after Orana escapes from the caves and to Kirkwall for a week or so. I adore trying my hand at making drabbles/ shortfics for rare pairs.
fictober 25- day 12 How does this help you?
day 17 you are not alone

I dropped by Hawke's home to return a book. She had given me a prior reading lesson, bade me take home this fiction. I found it too baffling. As I knocked on the door shyly, I caught a whiff of fragrant spices, like turmeric, cumin and coriander and some kind of meat. *Venhedis, I'm ravenous.*

I expected the dwarf to open the door, but it was the timid elf girl we had saved. Almost a week ago? She stared at me with bambi eyes, then averted her gaze to the floor. "Hello Messere, Fenris is it?" Her voice was wobbly and high, like a bird's.

I had come over in my usual spiky gear, oh no she must be in fear. I said, "Yes that's right. Orana, you don't have to call me messere now. Just Fenris. I'm here to visit Hawke." I was looking at her bunned golden hair, she still bowed her head. I tried to soften my tone.

Orana tentatively looked up and stepped back. "Yes of course. Please come in and sit. Mistress is upstairs sleeping I think." Coming into Hawke's front room with the inviting couches, a wave of exhaustion washed over me. I moved to the rack, disarming my weapons, breastplate and spiked gloves. I was wearing a moss-green cotton shirt and loose pants. The delicious food aromas were more acute as Orana was moving towards the kitchen.

She murmured in tevene- need to check on the curry. Before I could respond, my stomach embarrassed me with gurgling. I unslung my book-bag and laid it on the couch beside me. Did not realise Orana had silently come back, she giggled. "Ooh Fenris, you haven't eaten yet? It's ok, I've cooked a big pot of *quaerendae balls.* I can get some." My ears went hot as I flushed.

I replied in Tevene, "Yes, gracias please! Hm indeed I haven't eaten much just now. Can join me to eat." Orana smiled shyly, and I smiled back. The girl went in, the metallic clinging of utensils and plates.

She still needed some more time to adjust to this new life, not at beck and call of horrible magisters. But I shook away those bitter thoughts… I wanted to help her be at ease. Orana gave me the hot bowl, telling me to be careful. I gestured we could go over to the big table. And then I got to savour all these familiar longed for flavours, soft juicy meatballs. I closed my eyes, for a brief moment was transported back to childhood— Mother was given some leftover vegetables for good behavior, so she had cooked a similar tasting curry. We were slaves, I think I must have been very young. Could not quite see her face, her gentle hands on my forehead, ruffling my hair. *Leto, come and eat.*

She asked me was it nice. Timidly, and I said, "Very very nice! You are a pro. Tell me, how does cooking help you? And have you settled down with Hawke's family?" I was careful not to stare directly at her, and she started to talk more in Tevene. *Mistress and her mother are kind to me, but I miss papa. He taught me how to make quaerendae balls, and so much comforting soups. He always tried his best, told me to be brave. I am so touched you enjoy this… um when I'm cooking and preparing I temporarily forget about being lonely. Thank you, Fenris. For your rescue and kindness*

She almost wanted to curtsey but I gestured no, no don’t have to. Her eyes were shiny, I didn’t know what to do if she cried. I bade her to tell me what other dishes her papa had shown her. Speaking in Tevene was quite comforting, even if I had to communicate in Trade and common with most of my friends now, there was a certain rapport to be had with our own tongue.

Orana now seemed more relaxed and I saw she had eaten some of her food. I felt shy to talk emotions, but I should try. “You know, now that you’re here you are not alone. There’s our trusty dwarf, Hawke…. and even Merrill. Sometimes I found it lonely, but they are friends. We are free here, don’t have to bow or fear people.” My heart raced a bit as I tried to express all these.

She nodded. “You’re too kind , Fenris. So, are we now friends too?” I said yes, and reaching across, I held out my scarred hand. Hoping she would not be fearful of the lyrium. Her small hand was a bit damp as we held in a brief handshake. Compassionately, she added, “These markings must hurt all the time. I know of some recipes to make soothing balms. I can show you.”

I felt enthusiastic that I could pick up some cooking skills!

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