

Steam Fighting

t'Sade

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Curious Cabbit Press

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1

Dripping Fingers of Ice reached the end of the hall and turned around smartly on his leather boots. His neatly pressed uniform rustled against his chain armor as it settled back into place. His ceremonial spear, just sharp enough to be still considered a weapon, rapped against the highly polished tiles. Measuring his breath, he stepped forward, amusing himself by counting the sixty-three tiles from one end of the hall to the other. His eyes focused on a black jade bust of the Empress at the end of the hall. His rhythmic footsteps echoed against the marble columns every few steps. Seven columns on each side, running the length of the entire hall. He didn't give them even a second look as he paused at the end of the hall, in the proscribed place by his orders, and spun around again. His eyes briefly focused on the two doors at the end, both of them carved of expensive wood and trimmed with black jade. Stepping purposefully forward, he returned to the other end of the hall, capped with a massive set of doors. Each jade door stood easily eight feet across and took three strong men to open.

He sighed silently, spun around, and returned back to his route. He considered turning his head, to look at the elegant relief carvings in the wall, but he knew that his commander could be watching at any moment. The sneaky Air Dragon-Blooded had a habit of sneaking up on her men, normally with a sharp dagger in the back to remind them that assassins could come at any moment. He let a ghost of a smile cross his lips and reached the end of the hall.

Turning around, he started forward and continued his rounds. Thirty-five laps later, the tedium began to gnaw at him. He paused at the end and looked around, finally breaking the rhythm of his

guard duty. Not spotting his commander, he used his right hand to work open the leather strap holding his helmet to his head. With a gasp of relief, he yanked off the helmet and shoved it into the crook of his uniform. His chain shirt scraped against the helmet but he was just happy to get his head out of the humid confinement.

He took a long deep breath to clear his head, his eyes shifting around for his commander. He toyed with the beveled edge of the helmet with his gloved fingers. He turned around once to inspect the room, holding the spear in the crook of his elbow to brush his fingers through his short black hair. Flicking his fingers, he resumed his position for his patrol and prepared to put his helmet back on.

As the edge of the helmet started to obscure his vision, he spotted a shadow of a movement at the far end of the hall, toward the two sets of doors. He plopped his helmet back on, ignored the strap and stepped forward. He felt the prickle of excitement along his skin and he grinned at the thought of surprising his commander.

The ceremonial spear felt light in his hands as he crouched down slightly, coming up to where he spotted the movement. With a lurch, he stepped forward and spun around, bringing the head of the spear in a low arc toward what he imagined would be her stomach. His vision trailed behind, but he felt a spike of disappointment as the spear cracked loudly against the column.

It felt like forever until he responded again, spinning around and looking for his target. His eyes probed the shadows of the room, created from the twelve glowing lanterns from the ceiling. He twirled around again, looking for someone. His heart sped up as he stepped around the column, his spear held ready.

Spotting no one, he crouched down as he carefully walked along the length of the hall, his eyes furtively probing the shadows as he sought out his commander. He could imagine her sneaking up on him and he spun around, haft of his spear flashing in the air. She wasn't behind him and he spun around, his heart pounding against the inside of his ribs.

He reached the far end of the hall and came out along the wall. His eyes scanned along the length of the hall.

There was someone.

A shadow of movement, stepping out right in front of the very doors he was protecting. Dripping Fingers felt a lurch as his

commander caught him out of position, then he realized it wasn't his commander. It was a woman, no doubt from the curves and the way of her hips, but she was not the same rippling strength of the commander. Neither had he ever seen his commander wearing such an outfit. From head to toe, she was covered in black flexible material. It clung to every part of her body, highlighting her hips, her thighs, and even her breasts. He spotted two nipples pushing out of the fabric, but his eyes automatically followed the complicated folds as they drew his gaze down, toward the junction between her legs. He blushed and forced his eyes up, holding the spear as he cast out his senses to listen for someone sneaking up on him. He stumbled over the words as he spoke loudly.

“Halt!”

The unknown woman turned to face him, one knee twisting slightly as she stood in a alluring position and one that was completely inappropriate for fighting. His eyes flicked along her body and spotted the hilts of two red jade weapons peeking over her shoulders. The weapon sheaths were underneath the fabric wrapping her body. He saw that it was about a foot across, no doubt wrapped around her in some intricate, ritual manner. For a moment, he wondered if there were any clothes underneath the fabric, but his attention focused on her as a low, playful chuckle rose up from beneath the cloth across her face. He watched as her mouth moved, hidden from sight but not sound.

“You know, I was planning on just killing you as you stood there, prancing around back and forth, but then you took off your helmet.”

His lips tightened with the reminder that he broke his protocol. His eyes shifted to the side as he observed the room for others. He didn't spot anyone besides the intruder but he left his guard up. Her voice teased something in his memories, but he couldn't grasp his mental fingers around the feeling of familiarity.

Clearing his throat, he thought back at the rope in the corner. One hard pull and it would summon a fang of Dragon-Blooded, all honor guards for the hall and palace. Even as he mentally mapped out how he would lunge for it, he responded.

“Who are you?”

She almost purred, spinning around and bringing her legs crossed in front of him. It threw him off, it wasn't in the position of any proper fighter.

"Don't you remember? It's only been six years since you left the Manor, Tasata."

He felt like she slammed her fist into his stomach. No one ever called him by his childhood name, not for over five years. Not since he joined the House of Bells. He shivered with the thought, trying to figure out how she knew.

"W-Who are you?"

She chuckled again, walking in a low languished circle, the black-wrapped face turning to keep focused on him. He watched her body move, her tight buttocks flexing with her movement. He had to force himself to look away. Then she chuckled again and a bolt of memory crushed him.

"Wait, Y-Yanasu?"

She chuckled again, "They call me Dancing Thief of Fires now."

"Dancing... you exalted?"

She giggled softly, coming around again. This time, her back arched, drawing his attention to the swell of her breasts and the delicate curve of her form. He felt sweat beading on his forehead and his hand trembled around his spear. His patrol had gotten more than complicated.

"I... I take it you aren't here for just the visit."

She let out a tiny sigh, her back leg swinging around. This time, he saw how her body had brought itself into a balance, a fighting position at last.

"No, I'm here for a certain weapon inside that armory, Tasata."

"Dripping Fingers."

"What?"

"Dripping Fingers of Ice, that is my name now."

She repeated his name, as if she was tasting it, "Dripping Fingers."

Fingers felt himself being conflicted between the joy of meeting one of his childhood friends and the feeling of danger that radiated from her.

"I can't let you steal from the Empress, Yu-," he choked on her new name, "Dancing Thief."

“She’s long dead,” he thought he saw a smile on her lips, “Dripping Fingers. The Empress is dead and I want something in there.”

His heart tore in two, but he hefted his spear.

“I can’t let you do this.”

Her feet shifted again, another fighting position. He could see how her swords could be drawn quickly and how she would handle his most probably attack.

“Are you sure? Just for old time’s sake?”

Her voice brimmed with playfulness and hope. He had to fight against it and her obvious movements as he crouched down.

“Never. I have a duty to the House of Bells, the Empress, and the Realm.”

She clicked her tongue, just as he remembered she always did as a child. He spotted the shifting of her body as she prepared to strike. At first, he wondered how she could attack from that distance, but he threw up his spear as she launched herself off the ground, her body blurring with afterimages of heat and light in a long arc that brought her the length of the hell. The speed of the blow startled him, but his parry caught the twin blades as they impacted with the dense wood. The force of the blow shuddering through his arms. With a grunt, he shoved his arms forward, throwing back the blades and spinning his spear around for a blow to her stomach. His own blade whistled around as he dove backwards. It almost caught her in the stomach but her body flickered backwards, reappearing a few yards outside the range of the weapon.

He grunted with amusement. She snarled at him, the black fabric masking her expressions except for a parody of rising anger. She brought her swords down in a long arc, slashing down. He threw his hands ahead of him, bringing the haft of his spear to parry the blow. The impact shuddered through his spear, cracking the wood.

Losing his balance, he slammed his knee forward, catching her right in the knee. Her leg crumpled as he flew back, rolling along his spine and using his momentum to spring back to his feet. He saw a flash of fire and parried a rapid set of blows from the red jade sword before launching another kick in her direction. She dodged it, skipping backwards as flames licked up from the outline of her body.

He panted heavily as he staggered to his feet. He realized he was near the corner of the hall, mere feet from the guard rope. He stepped back, keeping his eyes locked on her. She stared at him, hefting her swords in her palm.

“Don’t bother, Dripping, I cut the rope already.”

He felt it against his back. Moving slowly, he stepped aside and tugged on the rope lightly. It came loose in his hand and slithered to the ground. He kicked it aside and glared at her.

“I guess its just between the two of us.”

She nodded, her head moving in its black prison.

“I’m sorry, Dripping Fingers, but only one of us is going to leave here tonight.”

He felt a measure of sadness filling him, but he started to walk toward her, his spear heavy in his hand. His heart pounding in his chest as he prepared for the next flurry of blows.

His spear swung around in a low, lazy blow and she crouched down to avoid it. He swung around, then rapidly changed direction to launch a forward attack. Her body jerked in response and he almost caught her right below her right breast. He snapped his haft across him as her blades slammed into them. He felt the first impact, then a second. He threw them back but a third blow impacted the haft. He realized she was aiming for the spear itself, trying to break his parry. Grunting, he jumped backward while planning his move. Spotting a chance, he kicked off a nearby column and jumped across the width of the hall, hitting a second column with both feet. Grunting from the pain that rose up his legs, he flung himself toward her. The spear whistled in the air. She started to dodge out, flames searing along her body, but he caught the very edge of her left shoulder, tearing fabric and barely missing the skin below.

Dancing Thief hissed out in pain, her pale white skin startling against the black fabric. Her swords came up in a powerful overhead blow, but he could see how she twisted her left hand to change the attack in mid-slash. Preparing himself for pain, he threw up his spear, sliding his hands back as the red jade daiklaves slammed into it. This time, the wood cracked loudly. He watched as she brought her attack down again on the haft, her intent now obvious. At the same time, he grabbed the spear butt with both hands and shoved

forward. Wood splintered from the sword's blow, but the shattered tip slipped past her guard to slam into her shoulder. This time, it caught her and threw her back as he pinned her against a wall. Fabric tore as she twisted violently, trying to escape.

He screamed out as he shoved into her again, piercing her skin as she let out a low hiss of pain. Her blade came flashing up and he had to release the spear to avoid it, slipping backward on the polished tile. His helmet flipped up and he tossed it aside. It clattered loudly to the ground as she yanked out the broken spear, tearing fabric and exposing two long rents in her uniform. The ragged ends fluttered to the ground, showing off a distracting expanse of pale skin and curves that were more than distracting. He swallowed hard, trying not to think about seeing the edge of her naked breast.

She chuckled as she shrugged out of a few black strips along her arm and held up her weapons.

“And now you are weaponless.”

Inwardly, he chuckled and focused on the fight.

“Come on then, I won't give up.”

She brandished her weapons, “Are you sure, we were friends.”

“No friend of mine steals from the armory.”

She sighed, then blurred forward. He saw her coming in as flames spread out behind her, just a hint of wings spreading out as she came in with an attack that left heat shimmers filling the space behind her. He felt his energy rising up, water dripping from his body as he snapped forward. His fingers reached out almost lazily and caught her wrists. With a wrench and a flash of blue, he twisted hard, throwing her up into the air. Her blades spiraled up in the air. He kicked himself off the ground, launching himself into the air to catch her in the midriff, throwing her flaming form almost the entire length of the hall. She landed on her feet, skidding the rest of the length to crunch against the wall.

“I don't need weapons, Thief.”

She stood up straighter, brushing off her hands. Her body flashes in the darkness of her uniform and he caught just a hint of nipples, pink and distracting. She chuckled dryly.

“As I can see. The Palace teaches you many things, fighting without weapons is just one of them.”

“The Palace of the Tamed Storm?”

She chuckled dryly, "Not all of us can go to the House of Bells, can we?"

He sighed sadly, "No, we can't."

"And I want into this vault, Dripping Fingers."

"I can't let you."

She almost sounded sad when she responded.

"I know."

And then they crashed together. Dripping Fingers grew wet as he pulled into his energy, fueling his Charms to grab her wrist, twisting her about. She managed to plant a foot on his thigh, twisting in his grip and using his attack against him. His world spun around as he flipped over. Snapping out one foot, he slammed it into the ground, catching the stunning blow. He grabbed with his other hand, catching multiple strips of cloth. Grunting loudly, he twisted the fabric, hearing it tear, and threw her forward. A fluttering of black fabric cascaded down to the ground from his fingers as he jumped to his feet. She skipped over, the fabric slipping off her shoulders and clinging to her breasts. He caught his breath as it slid down, catching on one perk nipple.

Dancing Thief caught his gaze.

"See something you like?"

"Only someone destined for the prisons."

She tugged at the fabric and it slipped off her breasts. Twisting the fabric in her hand, she yanked it. Fabric tore and slipped to the ground. She stood there, naked from the waist up, except for the black mask over her face. He spotted a curl of auburn hair peaking out. And he felt a shuddering in his loins and his honor.

"This isn't fair."

She reached up and pulled the black mask from her face. He gasped at her face, a refined woman instead of the young girl he grew up with. Only a single scar on her face, across her left chin and down across her throat marred it.

"No, war is not fair."

She smiled, arching her back, presenting a body toned with muscle and trained in thievery. He groaned, not from pain, but the conflict rising inside him. He thought about the years as friends, but then the oaths he made to join the House of Bells and later in his duty.

She must have spotted his decision.

“Very well, Tasata.”

“Dripping Fingers.”

“Ah yes, Dripping Fingers. Well, its time I steal your dance.”

Her face dropped into a serious expression. Dancing Fingers stepped forward, ready for his attack. They came crashing together. Her attack caught him against the throat, a knife-edge blow that he barely dodged. The flickering flames of her blow left a searing steam rising up from the impact.

Dripping Fingers twisted, grabbing her belt and spinning around. Thief kicked up, catching a nearby column and using it to stop his throw. He lurched from the aborted throw and then staggered as she brought a kick into the back of his knee. He tried to catch his balance, but the feeling of her hands grabbing his chain shirt, pulling it up to bind his arms. In response, he quickly snapped the ties, shrugging it off as he felt the heated air rushing past him. She jumped lightly to her feet, tossing the chain aside with a rustle of metal.

“There we go, nice and fair.”

He grunted, his eyes partially focused on her naked body.

“Not really.”

He pumped energy into his body, flaring it with the icy liquid that exploded from his pores, a cloud of mist as he jumped forward. His world slowed down as he grabbed her leg, and yanked up, throwing her toward the wall. Streamers of steam followed her, fading away almost instantly.

She kicked the wall again, and twisted around, but he continue forward with his blow, slamming his body against hers and pinning her to the wall. Kicking hard, he threw her legs apart and grabbed her wrists. The connection of their bodies flash steamed, rising up and almost blinding him but he forced himself to keep holding her tightly. She gasped as she violently jerked to escape. Her eyes flashed into his.

“And now what, Fingers?”

“You go to prison, Thief.”

Her eyes softened, her body losing some of his tenseness.

“Can’t you just let me go?”

On one hand, he really wanted to kiss her for some irrational reason. He bit his lip, fighting the urge. Her eyes hardened instantly and she surprised him by thrusting hard with her hips, staggering him back enough to escape his grip. Flames rose up around her, burning his skin until his own energies rose up in defense, the ice and water surrounding him. Steam rose from their brief contact as he struggled to reassert his position.

She grabbed for his wrists and he snaked them out of her grip, shoving his legs around to catch her again. She wrapped hers around him and he spun around to dislodge her. He felt his body grinding against her, her breasts against his arms. It was distracting in the fight, but he managed to drop himself in a control fall. She gasped as they hit the ground and he flipped over, pinning her to the ground. His legs spread between hers, forcing her knees apart as he pinned her uninjured shoulder and her opposite wrist to the cold ground.

She jerked in his grip. With a scream, she started to force him to the side, but he shoved himself down, pinning her even tighter against the ground. She let out hiss of discomfort. She tried again, but Dripping Fingers managed to keep her pinned down.

“Well, damn.”

Panting, he looked down at his childhood friend. He tried to think of how to keep her bound and calling for help. She took a deep breath, her chest heaving. Steam wafted off her flaming body, soaked by his mere presence.

“We are at an impasse, yes?”

He grunted as she tried to escape him. He had to force his hand down, pinning her tightly against the ground. She jerked up, her hips grinding against his and he realized that he grew hard in their fight. He felt beads of water dripping down his face, splashing down on her and steam rising from their unison.

“I-I can’t keep fighting this way.”

Panting, she jerked again, “I won’t give up.”

He could feel her conviction and her almost naked body pressed against him.

“I know, but what else-”

He froze as she lurched up, he tried to dodge but her kiss surprised him. Her lips found his, pressing tightly against his and stealing his breath away. He froze in shock.

She took the chance to shove him aside, scrambling to her feet in her effort to escape. He swore as he flipped up, jumping to his feet and catching her before she managed to get more than a few steps. Grabbing her from behind, he slammed her into the wall, pressing her face against the stone. His hips drove forward, slapping against her buttocks and driving her hips into the stone. Thief let out a whimper of pain, but he wasn't finished. Seeking out her hands, he pinned them once again against the wall, holding her tightly as he hissed.

“No more!”

He looked down to see her breasts, just the perfect size to fill his hands, but it wasn't the time or place. His body, on the other hand, thought it was a perfect time as his hardness grew tight against her back, stabbing her with his own mortal spear.

“Or what, you'll stab me with your spear?”

He flushed hotly, “My spear is broken.”

A wry chuckle, playful and angry at the same time, “Not from this position.”

His body throbbed with heat, but he hissed loudly in her ear.

“Stop fighting!”

She hissed back, “Never.”

Thief pushed herself from the stone, but it only ground her ass against his cock, reminding him of his own discomfort and growing, illicit passions. He shoved back, using his hips as a weapon. She shuddered and he felt her skin growing hot underneath his touch. His lips were next to her earlobe when he grunted.

“You are making this hard.”

“I can feel.”

She tried to escape again, but just managed to half-twist herself in his grip. He looked her in the eyes, her body pressed against his arms, her breasts heaving. His eyes flicked down to look at the pink nipples, tight and hard, then back up to her warm brown eyes.

She smiled warmly, inhaling to present her breasts right in his vision. He felt his cock surging with heat, his desire rising up sharply.

“I won’t tell.”

He had to swallow hard, “I won’t let you.”

The resolve in her eyes firmed up, “And I will keep trying until you kill me.”

He paused for a moment, “I don’t want to kill you.”

She jerked against him, griding her body against his, “Then I will never... ever... give...”

He silenced her in the only way he knew, with his hands tied with pinning her down.

Dripping Fingers kissed her.

She make a gasping noise, then slumped in his arms as his lips parted hers, kissing passionately. It was a sudden, brutal kiss and he felt her body tensing up to fight. He responded by releasing her one hand. He watched her eyes flash open in surprise but he planted his hand on her shoulder and pushed it against the wall, stepping back enough to pin her back against the wall.

“What are you-”

Her words froze in her throat as he forced his way back into her, spreading her legs with his knees and holding her shoulders against the wall. His lips found hers, stealing her own breath as he pressed his rock-hard shaft against her body.

He broke the kiss. She gasped, her eyes staring into his, trying to read his emotions. He leaned forward, feeling the ache burning inside him.

“Then, I will kill you, Dancing Thief,” he felt his face harden, “I will stab you until you die.”

Her eyes widened but he caught her in another kiss. His body felt hot, reacting to the flickering flames that rose up from her body. His own banner rose up higher, steam forming around them as she struggled in vain, trying to escape even as she melted into his kiss. He released her hand again, this time to fumble with his own uniform, to free his aching cock. She arched her back against him as he pressed his hand up between her legs, working his fingers through the fold of cloth until he felt a wet heat soaking his fingertips. With a wrench, he tore open her clothes and jammed in hard and fast, plunging his shaft into her body. It was the wrong position, but there was no question as he forced his way into her.

Her lips opened up against his, a gasping breath and a shuddering that coursed through her body.

He grunted as he plunged deep inside her. His cock felt deep inside the spasming depths of her body. His hand flew against hers, pinning her wrist back against the wall as she tried to twist out of her grip. He refused to let go of her, holding her tightly as he drove into her, plunging his shaft hard and fast. The sound of slapping skin rose up between them, steam clinging to their bodies as he vented his passion and fight into her.

Dripping Fingers felt her holding him, clutching to his shoulder as she thrust with her hips, giving him more access to drive his throbbing shaft into her. He felt her passion dripping down his length, splashing off his balls with the intensity of boiling liquid. He ignored the growing discomfort, driving into the very flames itself. He pounded harder and faster, the steam choking his breath as he felt an orgasm rushing up inside him.

Just as he reached the reach, she bucked hard and violently, throwing him back. He felt himself falling then slamming against the ground. His body exploded with ice and steam as he flipped her over, struggling with her. Her legs lashed out and he grabbed them, hooking them with his elbows and folding her almost in half. His cock felt naked in the air, the heated flames of her body searing at his balls.

He lunged forward again with his hips, but his cock head slammed up against the fabric that slipped back into place. She grinned, "I won't give up."

He chuckled, "And I will kill you."

Gathering up his energies, he drove into her, his cock scraping against the fabric. He repeated his drive, pulling on techniques from his wrestling. This time, his cock drove deeper, tearing at the fabric. Another thrust, harder and faster as water dripped off his body. Steam poured off their bodies as he drove again and again, forcing his cock deeper into the fabric.

She gasped, "What are you doing!?"

He grunted as he drove in again, water soaking her and steam choking their voices.

"Pounding... Surf... good for getting inside... armor!"

With a final drive, his Essence-wrapped cock tore through the fabric protecting her sex and plunged deep, slapping hard as he buried himself to his balls inside her clenching hole. She let out a wail of pleasure and surprise, her back arching as he held her folding in half.

His body grew wetter, draining his energies as he threw everything he had into taking her, hard and powerful, forcing her across the polished tile. His knees scraped against the tile. His cock felt raw, scraping against the black fabric, but the conflict of slick pleasure, burning pain, and scraping fabric kept him right on the edge of orgasm.

Her face twisted up as she gasped. He watched a flush rose across her skin, her body igniting in hot flames as she struggled to take the intensity of his blows. He watched as she struggled to contain something inside her, her body shaking with effort. Her free hands clutched tightly to his arms, fingernails digging in. He continued to drive into her, ceaselessly and powerfully, until something finally broke inside her.

Her burning banner flickered violently, then she let out a long wail as something exploded inside her, burning through her veins with an orgasm that sputtered out her anima banner. He grinned in fierce relief and continued to drive into her, plunging in and out with wet, slurping noises as his essence overwhelmed hers.

She let out another scream, then started to relax. Her body tightened as she looked up into his eyes, a mixture of fear and surprise filling them when he refused to stop. He continued to tug on the energy well inside him, fueling his passion with Essence until his entire glowed with the mist that rose out of him, turning to mist as the fading flames of her anima banner heated it.

He felt himself on the edge and relished it, driving harder and harder, trying to force another orgasm out of her. At first, it looked as if she wouldn't, then her eyes rolled up inside her and he felt her hips rising up to greet him, her inner walls clenching around his shaft. He let the grin spread even wider across his face as he forced himself to bury even more his aching cock into her body. The wet slurping slaps were loud in the hall.

A long wail rose out of her again and he felt her body tensing up, squeezing in vain effort to halt the incoming orgasm. Dripping

Finger's eyes locked on hers as he watched the pleasure take her, the whites of her eyes rolling back as she let out another screaming orgasm.

She tried to escape weakly but he continued to hold her tightly, keeping her caught in his inescapable grip as he pounded his pleasure into her, refusing to give up until his body finally succumbed to orgasm. He watched as she experienced orgasm after orgasm, her body shaking violently as she fought him. He forced himself to keep on going, even as his own Essence drained out and they were left, naked flesh against naked flesh. He felt his orgasm rising up even as she suffered through her countless one.

He felt blood on his tongue as he stared into her, trying to outlast her. Her body shook violently, shuddering with yet another orgasm. He wondered if he could make it when she suddenly gasped, then slumped down on the ground. He continued to drive into her, plunging his shaft in and out until his orgasm finally hit with the force of a hurricane. He let out a huge bellow, the orgasm sucked every ounce of consciousness from his body. His vision grew white and he felt his body passing out.

—

He woke with the feeling of someone dragging him to his feet. He sputtered and flailed around, his hand hitting something soft and covered in fabric. He snapped open his eyes, then stepped back in surprise as he stared at his commander.

“Wing-Lord! I’m so sorry. Oh, my, the vault!”

His commander was an older woman, appearing to be in her mid-forties but known as a cunning warrior and assassin. Her hair, white with age and Essence of air, was pulled out into a stern bun. A perfectly understandable hair style that went with her perfectly pressed uniform and the blue jade spear she carried with her always. She had a grim look on her face, eyes the color of blue jade and piercing into his very skull.

“The vault is safe, no one has entered or left it since the Empress... took her trip.”

Relief flooded through him. He slumped back against one of the columns, panting heavily. The older woman chuckled dryly and brushed some imaginary dust from her shoulder.

“Better than you grabbing your commander’s breast when you woke up.”

He blushed a hot red and looked away.

“Fingers.”

“Y-Yes, madam?”

“Put it away.”

He looked up in confusion, “Put what...” his voice trailed off as he realized she was pointedly looking at him, but lower. Shaking, he looked down to see his cock still out of his pants.

“Oh, my...” he blushed violently as he shoved his parts back into his body. He buttoned it back up, then flinched as the commander stepped right up against him.

“In one hour, I want you in proper uniform and in my office, explaining how I found you in this hall sleeping.”

“I-I-”

“One hour.”

He blushed violently. His commander stepped away and toward the polished marble walls. She looked at him and held out her hand. White energies rose up from her palm, curling up like steam. In the wall, he saw a print forming, a distinct shape of a woman pressed up against against it, hands on her breasts.

The older woman looked at him.

“And I expect you to explain this also.”

Steam Fighting 2: Dressing Down

2

Dripping Fingers of Ice felt his heart skipping painfully in his chest as he double-checked his uniform. The polish that he swiped across his boots floated behind him, teasing his senses with warm memories and reminding him that he only had a few moments to present himself to his Wing-Lord's office. He stopped at one of the gilded mirrors that lined one hallway and stood nervously in front of it. His uniform, a deep maroon color that fit with the black of his hair, fit him neatly. He noticed one of his buttons didn't lie flatly and quickly adjusted it. A pair of braided lines hung from his left shoulder, a symbolic bell woven into the very tip of the gold and silver. It was from his graduation ceremony from the House of Bells, only a few seasons before. He caught the color of his eyes, one of the deepest blues his betrothed said she ever saw, before he realized he was quickly running out of time.

Whispering a quick prayer to Daana'd, he spun on his heels and sprinted down the hall. Annoyed cries and swears followed him as he launched himself into the administrator quarters before skidding to a halt before his Wing-Lord's office. His eyes focused on the name above the door.

Tepet Tilis Asarte also known as Dominance of Air.

He paused for a mere second outside the door, then rapped his knuckles loudly. He felt a twisting in his stomach as he tried to come up with a story to explain his fight with Dancing Thief of Fires and the... inappropriate manner he fought her. He flushed at the brief memory, but a sharp voice cut through the metal-strapped door.

“Enter.”

Taking a deep breath, he opened the door and entered. To his surprise, it wasn't the commander inside but a younger woman, with a pleasantly rounded face but a cold, cruel expression plastered on her face. She stood behind a desk, a guardian for a door to her right that obviously lead into the Wing-Lord's inner office.

Her eyes were the color of a wind-swept forest, icy green and startling with the ferocity. With growing distaste, she looked at him from head to toe, practically stripping away his clothes as her look bore into his very soul.

"You are late, Sesus Alon Tasata."

He flushed at the sound of his formal name.

"My name is Dripping Fingers--"

She interrupted him curtly, "You are Sesus Alon Tasata and you are late."

"I'm sorry, um..."

She spoke curtly as she came around her. Her uniform accented her narrow waist and her curves. She had three medals on her breast, two for bravery in specific battles and one for duties to the Realm. Underneath, he noticed that her breasts were small. Without knowing why, he snapped his eyes back up to see her eyes locked on his, furious and overwhelming in their intensity.

"If you can be bothered to pay attention, Sesus Tasata, I am Tepet Tilis Redolin, a Scale-Lord in this legion."

Her glare deepened as she stood in front of him. He hesitated, then realized he was addressing a superior officer. Blushing fiercely, he snapped into attention, holding his hand in salute right above his sternum.

She mirrored her salute, then let it go with a snap. She gestured curtly to the side of the door.

"Wait here, because you were so tardy, the commander is already speaking with another," her eyes matched the snarl that curled her lip, "who failed her duties last night."

"What--"

"Silence!"

He stepped back in shock, then resumed his position where she indicated. She fixed him into place with the force of her personality, then picked up a set of papers clipped to a board. She glared at him and came back around the desk to sit down. It creaked softly as she

settled into place, then started to fill in a report he recognized as a formal censure, one of the strongest methods of recommending that a Dragon-Blooded be ejected from the legion.

His blood ran cold as he watched her write, unable to read the High Realm script from his angle. The idea of being thrown out frightened him. Years of the House of Bells, the schooling, the drive to excel in the things all Terrestrial were bred for, stood before him. He looked into the future, seeing the destruction of his family's honor, violating the very principle that burned in his blood. He could imagine his father's disapproval and the anger of his warlord of a mother. The very thought haunted him and he let his shoulders slump at the very thought.

Beyond the door, he heard a sharp sound, then another. He jumped at the suddenness of it. His eyes flashed over to the aide but she didn't even respond to the sharp noise. Then, a single sound that frightened him even more than he could imagine. A strangled sob ripped through the door, then deathly silence.

Minutes later, the door opened. He spotted his commander, Asarte, holding the door open and one of the Dragon-Blooded he trained with coming out. She was his age and a Fire aspect. However, there was great sorrow in her eyes and a stoic face as she stepped out. The commander turned to face her, standing in her office door, as the Fire Dragon-Blooded took a few steps. She turned, saluted once, and walked quickly out of the office. For a brief moment as they passed, Dripping Fingers saw tears rolling down her cheeks.

His commander, Asarte, focused her gaze on him. Like her aide, she had bright eyes, but these were almost the color of blue-dusted ice instead of icy green. They sent a shiver down his spine.

"You were late, Tasata."

He ducked his head, "I'm truly sorry, Wing-Lord Asarte."

"You should be, your tardiness has put me in a very foul mood."

He thought about the censure and bowed his head again.

"Again, I am—"

Her voice barked out, "Silence."

Dripping Fingers froze his lips and concentrated on keeping his body as still as possible. His commander ignored him as she went to her aide.

“Finish the censure paperwork, Tornado.”

“Yes, madam.”

His commander finally looked back up at him.

“There were two of you who screwed up last night. You were just caught with your pants down, she was caught with a drug hangover over at the war manse.”

He felt a trickle of worry dripping down his spine, sending prickles of discomfort along his skin.

Asarte’s eyes narrowed, “Unlike you, she failed to stop thieves from stealing the heartstone in her drugged state.”

His lips parted in surprise but his commander continued speaking.

“A recently formed heartstone after the prior... holder was killed in battle. As you can imagine, that is a terrible loss for the legion, the Sesus Alon family, and her own. It is my job to make sure the bulk of that loss weighs,” Asarte’s voice grew serious, “on that woman’s shoulders, as it belongs.”

He shivered at her tone. She looked him over, her tight bun of her hair shimmering in the light of her office.

“Come, we have a long discussion about your future.”

Dripping Fingers jumped and followed, his boots clicking on the floor as he followed her purposeful stride back into her office. A breeze rose up around him and the door slammed shut behind him. He jumped, spinning around, but her curt voice yanked him back into place.

“Stand there.”

He jumped and looked down to see a symbol for air right in the floor of her office. He fought back a sigh and stood in the center, feeling fear puddling in his stomach and reminding him of how much power she had over his life right now.

Tasata watched as Asarte walked around her desk. His eyes were briefly drawn to the heavy wooden desk. Heavily carved, it had scenes of the air dragon in its surface. At the corners and the feet, he spotted heavy iron rings. Threaded through the rings were a long sash embroidered with the Tepet Tilis symbols, but he could easily see them being used for a more... binding purpose. He drew his eyes back up to her as she stopped moving.

Tepet Asarte's uniform was perfect, beyond perfect. Ironed to an inch of existence, creases that looked like they would cut his throat. The buttoned jacket ran straight up her body, between the two firm breasts that shoved out as proud as the Imperial Mountain. Her legs were strong as were her arms, more than once she sneaked up on him to stab him in the back with the blunt end of the spear, her "stab" would throw him easily a few feet forward from the force of the blow. But, then there were smiles as she helped him up. Now, there were no smiles. This was a meeting of senior to junior, not comrades. He felt his chances with her now were as thin as the steam that rose up from his body the night before, that brief flash of pleasure already fading in his memory.

She picked up and opened a folder on her desk. Flipping through it with one trimmed fingernail, she looked up at him with her cold eyes.

"You have a problem with authority, Tasata."

He kept his mouth still.

"I see five, no six reports from your time in the House of Bells, and two more reports since you left the House. Most of them were petty, including urinating on a statue of Sesus Alon Badar."

He couldn't help a smirk crossing his lips. It was a good joke and one of the few he still remembered with joy, but the hard look from her brought him back into attention.

"I don't find it amusing. My husband is directly related to Sesus Alon Badar by three generations and it is by his wish and my own skills that I have this position in your," she paused on the word, "legion, Sesus. It is also why I have the ability to destroy your career in the legion and my husband wouldn't even pause a moment to ratify any censure I insist on."

He swallowed hard, sweat beading on his forehead. She set down her paper.

"Don't forget this, ever."

"No, madam."

She folded her hands in front of her, watching him icily.

"Now, start at the beginning. What happened?"

Memories flashed through his mind, of Dancing Thief of Fires, their fight, the sex. He blushed and ducked his head.

"Sesus, I asked a question."

He jumped, "I'm sorry, commander. I... I..."

She waited for a moment, "Start at the beginning, when did you report to duty?"

He stumbled at first, answering her questions, but she skillfully pried more and more of the story about of him. He had to struggle to keep parts of his story a secret, knowing that he had sex with Dancing Thief would be the end of his career, no matter how he stated it. Sweat dripped down his forehead as she pushed for specifics, probing and questioning and catching him on tiny little details.

Just as her rapid-fire questions were throwing him off, she stopped. He jerked, wiping the sweat from his forehead as he gasped from the effort. She leaned back, her icy gaze boring into him as she creaked in her chair. Her uniform was simple and plain, but heavily decorated with a dozen or more badges of glory, honor, and pride.

He shivered violently, gasping despite the fact she never even touching them. There was something about her questioning, brutal and rapid, it almost strangled him with its intensity and left him feeling drained utterly.

"Is that everything, Tasata?"

"Y-Yes, madam."

Her lips pressed tightly together.

"You are lying."

It was a statement, hard and cruel. He couldn't imagine the impact of her words on him, the pounding of his heart. His life was on the line and there was nothing he could say to save it. He fought with himself for a moment, but she interrupted him with a slow, hard voice.

"There should not have been a pause, Sesus."

He bowed his head, "I'm sorry, madam."

"You should be, but not as sorry as you will be."

He looked up, fear spiking inside him. She shook her head.

"You should have been avoiding the question. I already know you had sex with someone. Why are you trying to protect her?"

When he didn't answer, she stood up smoothly. Whispers of wind rose up around her, fluttering the papers as she came around her desk to stand in front of him. Her face was serious as she regarded

him from such a short distance. She spoke in a low voice, almost a whisper.

“When you leave this room, you will no longer be part of this legion, Sesus Alon Tasata. I will have your rank stripped and you thrown out. There are very few things the legion will accept and risking one of the Great Vaults due to your libido is far from acceptable in any house, even for House Cynis.”

He sputtered, trying to make simple words in the face of his dishonor. She looked him over, her glare deepening.

“You are a disgrace, both to the legion, your family, and your school.”

The words that came out of her mouth were pure poison, “I can’t imagine how anyone would have graduated, but this legion would be a far better place without you sickening the roots of Sesus Alon.”

He shuddered, fighting back the tears that threatened his eyes. He thought back to the Fire aspect who was dismissed before he came in and he realized that he would quickly follow her. The images of his parents, the anger and rage, swam in the vision of his mind and he took a long shuddering breath.

Her boots clicked loudly as she walked around him, her gaze keeping him in place, shaking his boots. He wanted to turn to face her, but he felt the daggers of her vision cutting into his skin. She circled around him once, then twice.

Then he felt the stirring winds against his ear as she spoke, a whisper.

“You stand on the knife edge of your life, Tasata.”

He clenched his muscles, trying to contain the fear that boiled inside him.

“If you upset me again, your life is over.”

Tasata felt a shuddering gasp leave him, a whimper of relief at her words. But, his commander wasn’t done speaking. Her whisper teased the very edge of his ear, close enough to touch him with her lips.

“If you ever disobey an order, your life is over.”

She pulled back and walked around him, her posture textbook perfect as she circled around him, like a vulture or a ghost about to feast.

“If you ever question me, your life is over.”

He shuddered, the threat stabbing him as he prepared himself for the worse. She circled around him one more time, then stopped in front of him, her heels clicking together and her uniform lining up in a perfect harmony.

“Do you understand?”

“Yes, Tepet Tilis Asarte.” He hoped using her full name would show how much he understood. He felt his breath coming in long shuddering gasps, just as the time he crawled out from the frozen river as a child, a brush with death that got too close. She looked him over, her face never cracking into any hint of compassion he remembered.

She then spoke in a softer voice.

“Do you really?”

He nodded, more sure than anything else in the world.

“Yes, madam.”

“A single missed order.”

“Yes, madam.”

She circled around him again, speaking up as she passed behind him.

“A single time you upset me.”

He repeated himself, “Yes, madam.”

She circled again. He felt her presence behind him, her breast brushing against his arm as she leaned over to his ear.

“I don’t believe you.”

He held still, waiting for her to drop her shoe. Her lips caressed his lips as she worked out an order, then spoke in a single curt whisper.

“Strip.”

The breath froze in his lungs as he jumped. Shaking more violently than ever, he turned to look at the hard, unyielding eyes. There was no compassion, no mercy for him, just the knife’s edge of his life.

“Madam?”

She spoke no words, she gave no more commands. Instead, she slowly looked behind him, to the door leading out of her office. His body felt on fire as he turned back to face her desk. Everything felt horribly wrong, but he had no more choice.

His fingers began to unbutton his uniform. He wanted to cry, scream, and lash out at the same time, so he focused his fingers on undoing one button at a time, pulling open the top enough to shrug out of it. He looked around for some place to put it, but nothing stood in range of his assigned position in the center of the air symbol. She stepped back, offering no help but keeping her ice-blue eyes locked on him. He hesitated, then folded it as neatly as possible before setting it on the ground. The cool breezes in her office began to flutter more, rippling through the papers as he worked at his boots.

Tasata felt foolish and weak as he tried to remove his boots while standing, he did but ungracefully, removing one and the other. When he looked up, her gaze never flinched away. She leaned against the edge of her desk, the triumphant smile back on her calculating lips. One of the rings clinked softly as it tapped against the side of the desk.

He shoved both his pants and underwear down at the same time, stepping out of his pants and carefully putting his bare feet back on the cool symbol on the ground. He remained crouched as he folded his pants, setting them on top of his clothes and next to his boots. His eyes peeked up to find her still watching and, without being told, he stood up.

Dripping Fingers never felt as naked as he did right then, the hard gaze of his commander seeing everything he had to offer. The look of disapproving cruelty never left her face as she pointedly looked at him from head to toe, lingering on his cock which jumped up in embarrassment. He prayed it would soften under her wilting gaze, but it grew stronger with the realization of the very power she had over him. She had his life in her hands. He cursed himself silently as he straightened his back and thought of fields and snow and old men, willing his body to stop responding to the burning gaze.

She pushed herself away from the desk and stood in front of him. Her eyes bore into his flesh as she looked at him from head to toes and back to his head. The gaze lingered briefly on his cock, much to his embarrassment. He had to fight the urge to cover himself.

The faint smile on her lips remained as she walked around him.

“You look like a fine example of a proper Dragon-Blooded, Sesus.”

Her hand reached down and lifted his penis with two of her fingers.

“A fine example.”

“T-Thank you, madam.”

She slid her fingers down his length, sending a strange erotic trill through his senses before letting it drop. It almost touched his leg, but a pulse of his heartbeat sent it bobbing back up, slowly growing to full mast as she watched. She let out a tiny chuckle and looked up at him.

“Stroke it.”

He froze, staring at her in shock, but the first hints of amusement faded instantly, leaving the dead-panned and very serious face looking back. Cursing himself inwardly, he reached down with one hand and slid his fingers along the upper edge of his length.

He was uncircumcised and his girth was just thick enough he had trouble touching his fingers around his base. But, this time, he just used two fingers to slide up and down, moving the wrap of skin around his head with slow movements as he watched her. His inner muscles twitched with anticipation as his length grew even harder.

She paced around him, then spoke curtly.

“Harder.”

He pressed harder, then wrapped his fingers around it, stroking just a bit faster as he watched her. A feeling of helplessness grew inside him, flushing his cheeks.

His commander returned to her desk and sat down. Giving him one long look, she pulled out papers used for orders and began to write. He didn't know what to do, so he slowed down. She looked up after a moment.

“I didn't say slow down.”

Immediately, he obeyed and stroked faster. The sensations that grew were beginning to get distracting and he could see a few droplets of precum forming on the tip of his cock. She returned back to her writing, the scratching of her pen on the paper almost unheard over his heavy breathing.

Two paragraphs later, she gave a command without looking up.

“Two hands.”

His cheeks bright red and his breath coming in soft gasps, he wrapped his other hand around his cock and began to pump his hands and hips together. His juices dribbled down his shaft, filling the room with the soft slurping noises of his masturbation. He closed his eyes as he concentrated on the feelings.

“Eyes open!”

He jumped and opened his eyes to find her staring at him. Her eyes dropped down to his shaft, then his commander returned to her writing, filling out orders. He had no clue if they were for him or anyone else, but he couldn't stop.

It felt like forever, him standing standing in her office, obscenely pumping his cock into his hands. The sensations were intense and his cock continued to swell, he could barely touch his fingertips around the slicked shaft. Droplets of clear fluid splashed down on the ground as he groaned softly.

“Tell me about her.”

He barely heard her and looked up. This time, the angry gaze was gone, but there was a hard look in her eyes, predatory and hungry. He swallowed hard and spoke, his hands slowly down as he found the words.

“She... um... she was wrapped-”

“Faster!”

The command echoed in the room briefly and he bent his knees slightly, buttocks clenching as he stroked his cock faster. He struggled on for a few minutes before she spoke again.

“Start with her looks. Wrapped in black? What type of wrapping?”

“T-Twelve inches wide, black cloth around her body.”

“Her breasts?”

“Y-Yes?” It was hard speaking while masturbating. It felt like her gaze pinned him to the floor and the wall as he found the images of Dancing Thief rising up in his mind, fueling a growing lust in his loins and sending fresh juices dribbling down his length. She looked up from his shaft and smiled.

“Seems like you remember. What did she look like? Her breasts, you like those?”

“Y-Yes, they were... about the size of my hand, pink nipples.”

His commander began to ask questions, very pointed questions, about Dancing Thief. The size of her nipples, the hair between her legs, the feeling of her body. Every question forced more memories into his mind, sending his cock stroking faster and harder. It wasn't long before he felt the sharp edge of an orgasm rising up, a burning need to come.

"Don't come!"

He almost came right then and there. Biting his lip, he squeezed the base of his shaft until the dry spasms finished. His hands trembled while sweat dripped from his body. He looked up and she nodded curtly.

"I didn't say stop, I said don't come."

Helplessness burned through his loins as he began to stroke himself again, dangerously close to the orgasm she forced on him. His cheeks burned, along with the rest of his body, and she began to ask questions again. Moments later, he almost came again, his cock slurping and sucking in his fingers, juices dripping down his balls and thighs.

She stopped speaking to finishing writing. Then leaned back, watching him as he frantically struggled to fight against the orgasm that screamed for release.

"What is her name?"

He fought back the tears as he pumped his cock, his body trembling with the effort. His mouth opened, but he couldn't say the words. She shook her head and held up two pages.

"These are two orders. One of them is a censure from this legion. It is your life. The other is not. Now, which order is dependent on the next question I ask, do you understand?"

Hands slurping, he nodded, already knowing the answer.

"What is her name?"

He fought for a moment, unwilling to give up his childhood friend, then he gasped.

"Dancing Thief of Fires!"

He almost came again, a flash of her body pressed against his, the heated feeling of her pussy wrapped around his cock. He bit his lip again, squeezing tightly as his cock fired dryly, straining to hold it in.

His commander set down both pages.

“And...”

He finally broke with a sob of effort, barely able to contain his humiliation and orgasm in.

“S-Sesus Alon... Yanasu.”

A raised eyebrow, “A cousin?”

“N-Nine times removed.”

“Hrm, far enough, the Cynis go for even twice removed.”

He gasped, not really seeing anything as he struggled to keep up his frantic pumping, everything screaming for release. Then, she gave it.

“Come.”

Dripping Fingers looked up in surprise, not sure he heard her right. She nodded and looked down at his cock. Her voice was soft but uncompromising.

“I said come.”

He did. A burning jet of pleasure exploding from his body as the long streamers of cum shot out. His knees buckled from the held-in pressure and he hit the ground as he came again and again, splattering the floor and desk with his passion. It was long and hard and he felt every spasm, every surge of seed that escaped him. With a low sob, he fell forward, supported by one hand only inches above the floor of the office as his other pumped out the last few spurts on the ground.

Dripping Fingers couldn't stand for a moment, the blow of his orgasm too much. Panting, he looked down to see his seed dripping from his own fingers and smiled at the irony of his name. His name came from when he put his hand into a freezing river to save a friend, not from a man masturbating for his commander, but somehow... it fit. He blushed at the thought and struggled back to his feet.

Dominance of Air nodded in approval, then picked up one piece of paper. With a precise movement, she tore it in half, then in quarters.

“As of now, you are to report to me every morning, by six. If you are not standing in front of this desk, you will be punished. And if you displease me, Sesus Alon Tasata, I will write a new censure and no amount of stroking will stop me from submitting it.”

At her pause, he bowed his head.

“Thank you, Tepet Tilis Asarte.”

“Now, there is a towel by the door. Clean up after yourself, get dressed, and I will see you tomorrow.”

When he left, he felt bare to the world, helpless and naked. Cheeks bright red, he looked over at his commander’s aide who regarded him with an impassive face. Sputtering, he bowed to her as a junior to a senior officer.

“I, I guess I will see you tomorrow.”

Her expression changed, subtle and somehow just as enigmatic. There was almost a smile on her lips as she bowed back. He wondered if she knew what happened behind the door or he was just one more Dragon-Blooded who found the hard hand of his commander holding his life on a knife’s edge.

About the Author

t'Sade has been happily using third-person singular since the late eighties. Besides that strange quirk, they enjoy writing a brutal combination of sex and violence for decades. Most of their stories explore the fringe edges of sexuality in the epic quest of trying to write a story for every fetish and turn-on known to the human libido.

It's going to take a long time.

Their writing can be found on their website, tsade.com. Most of it is free to read and enjoy.

t'Sade

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