

This has been edited by Tomon and Morde24. I hope you all enjoy!

Death's Avenger: Chapter 2 Episode 2

It took them about half a day of travel, but both Harry and Tyrande enjoyed once more being among the forest rather than above in the rocky, barren mountains of Wintersong. It was a completely new environment for Shy-Rotam, and the moment they got down into the tree line, the young frostsaber became almost entirely uncontrollable, moving around and sniffing at this and that, her whiskers twitching in delight.

"Ooh, what is that weird creature? What's this tree called, ooh this flower smells nice, aAGGH, but this smells disgusting!" Shy-Rotam continued to growl out a non-stop stream of words flowing from her mouth as she raced from one thing to another through the shadows of the forest, delighting in every sense and scent.

Watching this, Tyrande was amused, waiting for her young bonded to come back to herself. "Do not go too far, Shy-Rotam," she cautioned. "For all your ferocity, you are still a very young frostsaber, and you do not know what kind of threats there are in the forest."

Watching this, Harry also had an amused look on his face as they continued down through the hills deeper into the shadowed forest below. Quetzal, on the other hand, did not look amused. Instead, the Needlespine Shimmerback looked affronted by it all. "You would never see a young snake acting in such a manner. Why cannot the youths of other races be as sedate and calm as we are?"

"Because young snakes, while interesting, are nowhere near as cute?" Tyrande asked, her eyes twinkling even more than their normal white light would allow for as she turned her gaze to the large snake.

Quetzal hissed out a harsh laugh, his tongue flicking out before he flicked it back into his mouth. "What is cute? Can you eat it, or is it some kind of combat ability? Can it make you better at hunting or hiding? If not, it is foolish to care overmuch about it."

"Ah, but you are thinking too linearly, my fine scaled companion. Cute is important. In an animal, it can help protect one from being hunted by sentient creatures such as my race or the Kaldorei. In a sentient person, it can help in the early stages of the mating ritual." Harry replied dryly, shaking his head in amusement again. He knew that part of Quetzal's current annoyance was real, but a majority of it was because the snake enjoyed acting like snakes and other cold-blooded types were superior whenever he got the chance.

In response, Tyrande burst out into peals of laughter, shaking her head, throwing her hair in every direction, while Quetzal simply rolled his eyes. the sight was striking, the sapphire blue of her hair a backdrop to strands of silver that glowed with reflected moonlight, causing Harry to gulp a bit and look away.

Just then, as Quetzal turned his head to address Tyrande, Shy-Rotam pounced on his tail. The aggrieved snake hissed, twisting around his body and bearing its fangs at the frostsaber, but Shy-Rotam was fearless, hopping off of the snake's tail and smirking up at him in a particularly catlike manner. "Sorry, I thought it was a root..." she yowled in amusement.

"You did no such thing, you little..."

"Now, now," Tyrande said, getting between them. "Shy-Rotam, you know not to pounce on allies like that. Unless you're play fighting, and they know to expect it. And Quetzal, you should remember that for all my new familiar is young, she understands you just as well as we understand her thanks to Harry's translation spells and does not know if you are joking or not."

The two animals looked at one another, and Quetzal decided to be magnanimous about this. *I am the older, larger and far more powerful predator here, after all. No need to get my spines up at the foolish gamboling of a curious youngling.* "You are correct. I should learn more control of my tongue when dealing with the young of other races."

"And I'm sorry I pounced on your tail," Shy-Rotam answered quickly, then seemed to think about it. "Next time, I'll warn you I'm going to try first." With that, she was off again, sniffing the wind.

Tyrande laughed as Quetzal looked a little aggrieved before his serpentine features morphed into a lazy smirk. "Well, at least you will never need to question her spirit."

"Yep. And next time Quetzal, just flick Shy-Rotam off. She will get the hint that pouncing on you is not a good idea when she is sent flying. Just make sure to avoid the trees."

"That's a great idea, Quetzal said enthusiastically and very mockingly, as he looked around them at all of the trees that blocked their lines of sight in every direction. "How exactly would I avoid the trees again?"

Tyrande laughed, and Harry followed in turn before sobering a little as he heard a rustle in the bushes nearby and Shy-Rotam leaped out towards him, pouncing with a, "I'm going to get you!" coming from her mouth in the form of a rather cute roar.

The frostsaber, now being almost as large as Harry was tall, easily smacked Harry off his feet, landing on top of him with a woof of displaced air. Chuckling even as his ribs protested the treatment, Harry reached up and began to stroke her fur in just the right manner to cause the large frostsaber to purr. "And have you gotten it out of your system yet?"

Shy-Rotam nodded and moved over to Tyrande, rumbling happily as she leaned against her side. "When will we learn to hunt together? I have gone on some small hunts with my clan, but the scents here! There are bigger prey here and many different ones too!"

"We will spend a portion of every day on the hunt, yes," Tyrande answered, smiling and rubbing Shy-Rotam's fur as Harry had a moment ago, looking at Shy-Rotam's large paws,

estimating when Shy-Rotam would be large enough for Tyrande to ride. Another six months, perhaps. *Until then, teaching her how to move silently in the forest will only be a matter of awakening her instincts and putting them into action.*

Harry looked at Tyrande as Quetzal raised his head upward into the foliage of the nearby trees. Scaring several of the little strange monkey squirrel things that Harry had met upon his original arrival in Azeroth, a hiss of purely reptilian amusement accompanying the move. From his back, several needles shot up into the foliage, and one unlucky creature was struck twice, becoming paralyzed as the others scattered in fear at the giant serpent that had suddenly appeared among them.

Since it was too small to bother sharing, Quetzal didn't let the creature drop out of the tree. Instead, gobbling it up in a single bite. However, the giant snake knew he would need to eat eight or nine of them to be full. But one was enough to sate him for a day or so. "I vote for hunting in the morning," Quetzal announced as he joined the conversation, the prey so small it didn't even make a lump in the giant needlespine shimmerback's body. "Boars are always more active in the morning, are too stupid to know when they shouldn't attack someone, and they make excellent eating."

"Knowing boars as well as we got to over the time we were in the forest, I have no doubt that we will be hunting them first," Harry replied dryly, patting his snake companion on his massive side. "For now, though, um, where exactly are we going? These are your forests, and beyond knowing one direction from the other, I have no idea where we're going."

Tyrande laughed again, this time much more quietly than before. After a single glance around, she pointed in a direction out through the forest. "That way. We came down out of the Winterspring mountains at the far eastern edge of the range. So we will want to continue heading straight east for a time towards the coast and the port of Danaviea. From there we will take to the Frozen Sea, in order to get to the Broken Isles."

As she led them off, Tyrande's mind wandered for a moment, trusting in her companions to warn her of any danger and honestly not expecting any. Instead, the high priestess of Elune was wondering about Harry, her new friend, and what was to come when he began to interact with her people. *Unfortunately, Danaviea's Sentinel commander is one of the most outspoken against the arcane. Harry's introduction to the rest of my society might not be the smoothest. On the other hand, if he can win Nightshade over, he will probably win over most of my officers and people. And if not, meeting her will certainly prepare Harry for the worst.*

Almost as if he was reading her mind, Harry asked, "By the way, are you still concerned about how your people will react to me?"

"So long as they are willing to look past their prejudices, I believe that any of my people who get to know you will realize that you have nothing in common with the former Highborn

Arcanists that we were forced to banish, and certainly nothing to do with the royal court or our enemies. It is getting to that point that might cause issues,” Tyrande answered. “Still, I believe that you have a good chance of winning some acceptance if we can continue to introduce you to smaller groups of my people at a time.”

She shook her head. “And not, for example, the higher-ups of my government or the reactionary elements among the populace. But despite Sentinel Commander Nightshade, Danavia is one of my people’s more open-minded towns. I doubt you will face many issues beyond some staring and perhaps some wariness among the normal populace.”

“I would be willing to use my Invisibility Cloak to simply bypass the town,” Harry offered with a shrug of his shoulders. “That way, you can have a few days to spread tales about me, and then they’ll meet me afterward.”

“No Harry,” Tyrande answered swiftly, shaking her head once from side to side. “Your presence would come out eventually, and any attempt to hide you would make your eventual revelation seem all the worse. Besides, for all that my people are adept at hiding and misdirection in battle, we prefer to not use such guile amongst ourselves. No, it is best to get your introduction to people over with quickly. All I would ask is that you refrain from insulting anyone who insults you and keep your spellwork to both the minimum and nonlethal in nature.”

Harry frowned, thinking on that point. “I don’t like putting those kinds of restrictions on myself, although I’m not really a taunting sort of person, so you needn’t worry on that score. But as for keeping my spells nonlethal, I’m not certain I can promise to do so if someone, or several people, are attacking me with their lethal intent. I can only promise to try.”

“That is all I can ask,” Tyrande smiled, and the two of them fell into a companionable silence once more, watching as Shy-Rotam bound ahead of them, sniffing at something on the ground, then back to them before pausing in front of a new creature she had never seen before. This was a small, bright red and orange frog, about the same size as Shy-Rotam’s paw, its colors making it stand out even more at night. “Ooo, what is that?”

Quetzal looked over at the frog, then, showing his earlier annoyance with her was partly an act, decided to not allow the young cub to do something she would regret later. “That is a poisonous frog. Do not try to eat it. It will make you most egregiously sick if you are lucky.”

Shy-Rotam frowned, staring down at the little frog. “But it’s so colorful, and it’s not running away. It should know where it stands on the food chain.”

“It does,” Quetzal answered dryly, shaking his head from side to side, staring down at the little frog himself. “It stands precisely on the **side** of the food chain because no one in their right mind on said chain would eat it. But if you want to spend several days regurgitating everything you have eaten in the past few weeks, and perhaps with a fever and a nasty shakes to go with it, go right ahead.”

At that, Shy-Rotam backed away, then twisted around abruptly pounced. The frog hopped away quickly, bounding off into the forest, and Shy-Rotam frowned, staring after it. But she didn't go after it, having taken Quetzal's words to heart, merely wanting to impress upon the creature that it still lived due to her largess.

"Let that be a lesson, young Shy-Rotam. Just because something is nice and bright and interesting looking does not mean it is actually palatable," Harry interjected loftily.

"Such wisdom from one so learned in leaping before he looks should be listened to most strenuously. After all, learning from the mistakes of others is the true path to wisdom," Tyrande teased Harry.

"Ha, ha...it's so funny because it's sooo true..." Harry said dejectedly, then his eyes narrowed, and he looked up at the taller Kaldorei woman. "Although I wager you have some stories of your own to share."

"Heh, indeed I do. A tale for a tale then?" She asked in some amusement, thinking about another angle to get her people used to Harry as she mentioned their normal method of sharing bits of their past. *I might want to find a young elf for him.. I think that he has quite a bit to offer the right lady, so long as she is very understanding. Although I'll have to get my people used to him and his very existence before playing matchmaker. And find out why he always looks like he is having trouble deciding whether to grimace or snort in laughter whenever we skirted around the topic of our race's different lifespans... There's something going on there, but I won't pry. Yet.*

The two of them continue to banter back and forth in low voices, continuing to exchange tales as they moved through the forest. Quetzal moved along sedately beside them while Shy-Rotam continually bounding ahead or around them, interested in everything.

But as night gave way to dawn, Harry and Quetzal's prediction proved accurate. As they moved on, a boar did indeed come out of the bushes. The moment its beady eyes locked on them, the boar charged towards them with a bellowing warcry. Boars were simply too stupid and far, far too aggressive to be really influenced by Harry's limited Nature Magic. Indeed, Tyrande knew that even her own race, as part of this forest as any animal could be, often had trouble with them, along with the occasionally idiotic younger predators, although not nearly as often.

Harry flung up a shield, and the animal bounced off it, causing him to stumble to one side, shaking his head, and then pawed the ground, racing forward again.

"Shy-Rotam, attack from behind. Try to leap on its back and go for the area at the back of the neck. There you will find its spine," Tyrande instructed like she was sitting in a training ground and giving out orders to a young group of would-be Sentinels.

"Oh, of course, don't mind the one who's actually keeping the beast at bay," Harry muttered, causing Tyrande to send him a small smile at his sarcastic humor.

Shy-Rotam had frozen at first at the sight of the strange animal. But now the tiger shook herself and instantly started to go around the animal, as it charged Harry again, only to bounce off another shield. Boars were single-minded like that.

Quetzal had also moved forward, and now he glared down at the boar. Unlike many of his reptilian kin, the snake didn't have a paralyzing or hypnotizing gaze. But the sight of such a massive snake rearing up in front of it was enough to give the boar some pause. It backed away for a second, and Shy-Rotam struck from behind, leaping on top of the other creature.

To Shy-Rotam's astonishment, her weight didn't make the large boar fall to its knees. It stumbled but did not collapse, and then the boar was trying to buck her off, its large, pointed tusks rearing back towards her.

But Shy-Rotam was having none of it. Her instincts had now fully come to the fore, and she ducked her head low, her claws digging in deep to keep her on top of the boar. Then her mouth flashed down, fangs gaping. Biting through the bristles wasn't fun, and one of them got up Shy-Rotam's nose. But she was still able to find the muscle and bone of the spine and bite down hard.

Pound for pound, a frostsaber's bite was even more powerful than the bite of a snake like Quetzal. It severed the boar's spinal column, and the boar collapsed, paralyzed. Then Shy-Rotam tore off a chunk of its back, gulping. "Hmmm, it is tasty!"

Harry moved forward, and between him and Tyrande, they skinned off enough of the animal's hide, setting aside enough of the meat for the two of them. Then Tyrande cut off a haunch for Shy-Rotam, leaving the rest of the beast to Quetzal.

"Why does he get the larger portion?" Shy-Rotam asked quizzically. Just quizzically, though. She wasn't annoyed, which surprised Harry. But Shy-Rotam had hunted with her clan several times and trusted Harry and Tyrande to not hand over what Shy-Rotam deemed her kill without reason.

"I require one large meal a week, young one. You will never eat as much in a single sitting as I will, but will have to eat more often," Quetzal answered politely.

Nodding at that, Shy-Rotam dug into her portion with gusto and, to Tyrande's amusement, with none of the care that most of the tiger familiars she knew of showed. *Hopefully, that too will change in time.*

Taking it as a given that they would rest now since the two animals were eating, Harry and Tyrande decided to set up camp. While not naturally nocturnal as the Kaldorei were, Harry had gotten used to it after the months of traveling with his companion. He'd even created a sleep mask for himself to block out the light.

As Harry went about setting up the tent, Tyrande scouted around, making certain that the boar, a male, had been alone. It was, and she returned reporting on this as Harry turned his attention from the now finished tent, such as it was, to the runes that he would put out to defend their camp.

Tyrande sat across from him as she began to put together a small fire so they could cook their meat, smiling faintly as a bird moved down through the foliage to land on Harry's shoulder. *I do not think it will take long for Harry to get in touch with his Phoenix side with the help of the Tauren. His snake side? For all his friendship with Quetzal and his combat style, I think that will take a bit longer.*

Shaking her head at that, Tyrande held out a small portion of the meat to the bird while watching Harry work. Harry had been teaching her about runes for a few weeks now, but Tyrande was nowhere near the point where she would be able to create anything herself, although it was astonishing to think that she might eventually be able to do so.

Not, mind you, that her people were without knowledge of runes. Runes had been a primary pillar of the Arcane arts used in times gone by by the Kaldorei before the Sundering, when Tyrande and Malfurion had led their people to turn their backs on the Arcane and the addiction it built up within those who used it. Even today, runes were used in certain places: the temple of Elune, the Well of Eternity, and other places of great importance. Places which were able to create their own magic to power the runes in question.

But what they could do with those runes was so... well, limited in comparison to what Harry's runic arrays could do. They couldn't do as many impressive things with their runes as the Highborn had been able to do with their magic. The runes also had no **direct** combat applications, like so much arcane magic was devoted to.

And yet, Harry's runic arrays could do so many more things. From something so prosaic as a runic array to keep bugs away from them, up to the defensive arrays that Harry was making now. Easy, simple to create once you knew the secret of the runes, and easy to take down once you were done. Not the work of dozens of people to create a single rune which would last until someone destroyed it.

To say nothing of the space expansion charms on Harry's tiny trunk, which she could see on its necklace around his neck. That kind of magic was almost unknown entirely to her. The closest she could think of was the blessing of Elune that created the partner-totems of the Sentinels.

The journey continued for a few weeks, their travels slowed by the need for Shy-Rotam to hunt daily and for Tyrande and to train with her. These were two different things, and the second was not aided by the frostsaber's natural instincts. Knowing how to follow orders and fight with someone whose body was not like your own was very different from what the young 'frostsaber was used to. Tyrande also taught her how to attack humanoid opponents, with

Harry joining in to help Shy-Rotam build up her combat sense: the ability to keep track of multiple enemies around you.

But beyond the odd boar and, at one point, meeting a bear, the trip was mostly uneventful. The bear in question was a massive matriarch leading a pair of cubs. But thanks to Harry's Nature Magic, it didn't automatically attack them, although Shy-Rotam seemed to think that picking a fight with her might've been a good idea before Tyrande calmed her down a bit.

Eventually, they began to see signs of the Kaldorei. They were small flashing lights in the trees, tiny crystals set here and there reflecting the light of the moon above. These were a visible sign of their devotion to Elune, small markers that denoted the edge of territory within the forest that the Kaldorei would truly call their own.

Tyrande began to point other markers out, and then made Harry come over to what looked to Harry like a small piece of art on a stone slab that had been set up in between a few tree bows, but which in reality was a sign, telling them how much further it was to the port, as well as where to find the nearest Sentinels. While Harry's translation spell allowed him to understand spoken Kaldorei, he could not read their languages, which came in two forms: one, a formal writing style that they used for everything important, and second, a more cuneiform-like style that was used when it was thought to be necessary to convey emotions or when describing something physical in nature.

A few moments later, a silver disk about as tall as Shy-Rotam was at the withers came up, caught his eye, and Harry asked what it was, being told it was a 'passing marker'. "Passing markers are placed on a tree nearby where someone has passed on, or more often, are made to mark something momentous in the lives of those who live there or nearby. This one," Tyrande leaned forward, pointing out a set of marks on top of the large, silver disk, then to the picture in the center. "This marks the passing of a group of Sentinels who were born in the nearby town during the war of the Satyrs. At the time, we had the habit of keeping units raised in communities like that serving together. It was not a wise policy, one I still sometimes feel guilty over."

"Erk," Harry grunted, shaking his head and patting her shoulder. "I can understand that. My own nation did something similar at one point, Pals Battalions they were called. Although I doubt that your losses were ever like what we faced in World War 1."

"The way you just drop the idea of a war large enough to be called a 'world war' in there would frighten me if I had not seen the horrors of the Demons in the War of the Ancients," Tyrande drawled, but the smile on her face, which had been bittersweet, was now somewhat wry. "Nor do I understand the word 'pals', although I can understand the gist of it. But while at times we Kaldorei grieve those who have passed before their time, we also celebrate the lives of those who have passed on in honor, hence this marker. It is not to simply grieve, but to acknowledge and honor the passing of the Sentinels in question."

“So these smaller pictures, they detail some moment from the lives of the Sentinels in question?” Harry asked, pointing at the image of a small tiger image that looked to be sitting on the back of another figure.

“Indeed, little jokes like that, in-jokes I suppose you could say, are common in Elistran.” Elistran was the name of the informal artistic writing style. “I’m afraid I could only guess about the nature of most of these images.” She turned away from Harry to gaze up at a nearby tree. “Perhaps one of the locals could tell us more, hmm?”

At this, two more Kaldorei dropped down from the tree she was gazing at. They were both men, and something about their unsure or awed body language told Harry they were young, or at least inexperienced, which he knew wasn’t the same thing. They wore what looked like a uniform, a black and green leather jerkin and leggings, with a breastplate that somehow seemed to have the same colors on it, letting the two merge into the darkness of the forest. They were both armed with bows and the same kind of double-bladed swords that Tyrande used, although they were not nearly as large as the high priestess’s.

For her part, Tyrande was both surprised, and somewhat thankful, to see two males in Sentinel colors. That was a rarity in this day and age. All too often, those men and women who wished to serve the Kaldorei nation as a whole instead of following a civilian profession felt that Sentinels service was for women only, and that men had to become druids. There was no reason for this, really. Yes, Elune preferred priestesses, but the Sentinels were not fulltime priestesses in her worship. Women could, in contrast use Nature Magic just as well as men could. But the Kaldorei society had somehow shifted to make it almost unheard of for men and women to join the other’s so-called ‘specialties’. Tyrande had spoken out against such thoughts, but for once, her words had not made headway against this strange societal drift.

The two newcomers had hidden so well that Harry, Shy-Rotam and even Quetzal were taken by complete surprise. Tyrande had become aware of the two Sentinels the moment they were within hearing range but had not said anything, wanting to see how Harry would react, and, moreover, wanting to speak to Harry in such a way as to make certain her own opinion of him was obvious to the two silent watchers.

Thankfully, as she had hoped, Harry simply turned in their direction but made no aggressive move. He didn’t even curse. Instead, Harry simply nodded in the newcomer’s direction. “That was very well done. Quetzal, how come you didn’t smell them? I thought you snakes took pride in your ability to smell things.”

“They smell of trees and forest. They have no scent of their own underneath to detect. Odd,” Quetzal shook his head from side to side, his needles slowly lowering from the aggressive stance they had been before.

Shy-Rotam yowled, “I didn’t smell them at all! I still have a lot of learning to do, I suppose.”

"The fact that you acknowledge that you have shortcomings is half the battle, my dear," Tyrande said, patting the young tiger on the head.

The Sentinels had been about to greet Tyrande, but this, hearing both animals respond to their companions as if they were able to hold real discourse, threw the two Male Kaldorei off entirely. They looked between Harry the snake and Tyrande, then one of them seemed to gather himself as he began to speak. "H, High-priestess Whisperwind! It is a delight to be in your presence," said one of them, bowing profusely to her, obviously continuing a prepared greeting.

"None of that," Tyrande scowled, shaking her head as she let out a faint chuckle more rueful than merry. "After all, I am still on my sabbatical." *And I would rather not have to deal with more of that formal fluff than I have to.*

The Sentinels all looked at one another, shrugging their shoulders. "As you wish, Mistress Whisperwind."

"I suppose that's going to be the best I can get," Tyrande murmured, now keeping down a put-upon sigh, needing to put a surprising amount of effort into it. *Hero worship. Honestly, do I seem so aloof as all that to our younger generations?*

"And um, what, er, that is, who is this?" One of the Sentinels asked, pointing at Harry.

The other one was not nearly as polite. "Did you capture it? Is it some kind of pet that you have taught our language?"

"Oh, you are just making a lot of points right now with me," Harry murmured, his eyes narrowing. "Pet, really?"

"That is how small Vrykul were kept at the height of Queen Azshara's power," Tyrande reminded him. They had talked about that before, soon after they had first met.

"How long did it take you to teach it to speak so well? My father always told me small Vrykul were almost as stupid as squirrel-monkeys," the same young male said while his fellow shook his head at his bluntness, the movement showing a certain habitual note to it.

"It is a 'he', thank you, and would rather not be spoken to in such a manner. I am a human, and as sentient as any of you," Harry said, although he was smiling as he did. "If you all continue to assume that I am a beast of some kind, perhaps spending some time as beasts yourselves would be appropriate?"

Rolling her eyes, Tyrande put a hand onto Harry's shoulder, reproving him very gently. He was in the right here, after all. "Forgive this young man for his ignorance. After all, they have yet to spend any time in your presence. Nor do either of these Sentinels have the ability to feel the nature Magic within you." She then turned back to the two local Sentinels. "This is Harry Potter. He is an ally and friend of mine, who has also been a student of Cenarius."

Nodding, Harry bowed from the waist. "I have that honor, although my training is not complete just yet. If you're worried about any threat from either of us, the only threat that Quetzal poses is to the local boar population."

"Er, there were reports of seeing the marks of a large snake, and we were indeed concerned that it might attack some of our farmers. But if er, if Quetzal is smart enough to um, to speak, then I suppose we can assume he is trained well enough to..."

"There's that word again," Quetzal grumbled, leaning down and forward to stare into the Kaldorei's eyes. "I am not trained. I am intelligent and sentient and I make my own decisions. As Harry said, do not speak of me as if I am an unthinking animal."

"Or me!" Shy-Rotam growled. "I'm young, but I can understand you too."

"Th, That isn't so unusual young tigress, erm, it, it is our understanding of your kind that that is unusual," the Sentinel who had yet to be infected by his friend's foot-in-mouth disease answered. He fingered a small stone statue that was hanging from his belt for some reason. "How has such a miracle come about?"

"You have Harry to thank for that. He can use magic to perform many miracles. One of which is a translation spell. So long as the individual has enough basic intelligence to have an actual language, it will allow others to understand the target's speech. In this case, Harry has used the spell on Shy-Rotam and Quetzal." She felt adding that Harry could already communicate with Quetzal was a needless complication.

Eyes widening, the two Sentinels stared while Tyrande sighed internally. She had left out where Harry got his magical power and hoped to push back any issue on that score. It seemed to work, but it didn't make her feel any better, fooling such young examples of her race. *Why they cannot be more than four hundred years old.* That was barely past the teenage years for a Kaldorei. They were not only essentially immortal, but their race also matured very slowly.

However, her little lie worked. Instead of becoming defensive or hateful at the idea of someone using Arcane magic, the two took it as a given that Harry was a druid and that being of a different race, he would have access to different abilities. "Erm, could, could you perhaps your translation spell on our own familiars?" When Harry nodded, the more polite young man touched the small stone statue at his side. He pulled it off his belt and tossed it to one side.

As Harry watched in slack-jawed shock, the tiny statue started to blaze with golden and green light then shifted, shivering almost like water before it transformed into a fully grown panther in midair, which landed on the ground on soft paws. It immediately moved over to its rider, staring between Harry, Quetzal and Shy-Rotam, apparently, judging by its fanged scowl and the way it growled, only approving of the young tigress.

As his partner started to sooth the panther, Harry shook his head, leaning toward Tyrande. "You've been holding out on me. I thought your people didn't know about transformation-type magic."

"That is not an Arcane transformation. It is a blessing of Elune to our Sentinels, so that they are never forced to leave their bound partners behind." Tyrande then smirked. "And yes, I never told you about it, as I wanted to see your face when you saw the blessing in action."

"Heh, alright, I'll give you that, but if you think you're going to get away with just calling it a blessing of Elune, you had better think again," Harry mock grumbled. Then, when the panther's partner indicated they were ready, Harry pointed his finger at the panther. There was a light purple flash of some kind of magic, and then, Harry said, "Sorry if that startled you, your friend here just requested I use a spell on you."

The panther growled out, "And why did my bonded request this? Speak quickly, else..." The panther paused, staring in shock as his companion, who had gasped and moved forward, his eyes widening. "H, how, am I speaking like a Kaldor?"

"You are indeed," Tyrande intoned, smiling slightly.

Shakily the rude one also asked to speak to his own companion, and after ribbing him gently for a moment, Harry agreed. Soon, a tiger too stood there, blinking in shock as his bonded scratched at his neck, the tiger actually giving verbal directions now on where to do so.

Leaning in, Tyrande whispered into Harry's ear with a faint smile. "You see, Harry, that spell will get any Sentinel on your side."

Chuckling wryly, Harry looked at her sideways as if asking, 'are you sure about that' and then waved away the fulsome thanks of the Sentinels.

But when they sobered, Harry's opinion seemed to be shared by the two Sentinels. "Well, if you are being accompanied by Mistress Tyrande, that is enough to mark you as a friend, above and beyond this spell, which would make you as welcome as the mightiest of our own druids. Although... I doubt that Commander Nightshade will approve. She won't like the idea of a, a human going around in our territory, regardless of who vouches for you, since you are not Kaldorei.

Tyrande sighed loudly, not even bothering to hide it from the two young men. "Alas, that is all too believable considering what I know of Nightshade. Still, let us continue on. At least with you two escorting him, we will not have issues traveling through Danaveia. Still, it is best to get Nightshade's reaction over with quickly, before sunup." *This isn't even considering that Nightshade will detect that Harry is using something beyond Nature Magic. Translation spell or no that is bound to make this more annoying.*

Entering the town was a startling surprise to Harry. It was a very subtle change from the forest around them. The trees were larger, and broader but with fewer small branches on the

bottom several yards. At first, Harry thought that they were simply a new type of tree but noticed a uniformity that was impossible to find in nature. Then he started to see dwellings in the trees. They were not made of planks and such, rather the trees themselves had been molded into dwellings. Those dwellings were all interlinked as well by carefully designed walkways.

Meanwhile, on the ground, other houses, slightly more normal-looking, also began to be seen, with Kaldorei moving in and around them. The first few were Sentinels, these fellows wearing more complete armor than the two Sentinels escorting the group. Then more Kaldorei appeared, all of them seeming to be dressed in normal-seeming clothing rather than armor. The clothing was made of cloth, leather and something that looked like silk. No jeans were in sight, Harry thought with some amusement.

And as they moved out from around one particularly large tree, he found himself staring at what looked like a bazaar of some kind, spread out in among the trees, with several hundred Kaldorei. The sight of that many people froze Harry for a moment, not having been around so many recently, but then he shook himself before following Tyrande.

But what really surprised Harry was the various shades of skin, their eyes and the hairstyles. Lunara and the other nymphs that Harry had met all had the same wild, seemingly uncared for hair. But The Kaldorei, all of whom seemed to favor long hair man or boy, had dozens of different hairstyles, some of them very strange. The sight of one man who had his hair done up in several large spikes pulled out and formed into spikes directly over his ear, and a woman with a mohawk stuck with Harry. As did the skin colors. While Tyrande had violet skin, that was not the normal color for her people, who seemed to favor a darker, almost purple color or an even lighter violet color.

As soon as the people in the town spotted her, it was obvious that many of them recognized Tyrande, but thankfully, most of the Kaldorei didn't seem to have the same need to get near and touch their idols as humans did. Instead, as one, every Kaldorei there bowed deeply, murmuring, "High Priestess Whisperwind," as they did so.

Only a few came forward, kneeling for a moment on the grass and dirt beneath as they crossed arms over their chests. The move reminded Harry of a movie about ancient Egypt he'd seen once. "High Priestess Whisperwind, may Elune bless you!" Others, as they got over their surprise, shouted out to Tyrande to come and try their wares, or their food or whatever.

Harry moved to stand beside his friend, whispering, "Is it always like this? If so, I can see why you want to take a sabbatical. Heck, I think you deserve a medal for only taking one sabbatical every three hundred years. I'd take one every other year. And yes, the sabbatical would still be a year long."

She smiled wanly, then shook her head. "It's not this bad near the main temple in Nordrassil, with other priestesses of Elune, or the upper echelons of government for... various

reasons. But I don't think I've actually ever visited this town before except once when it was being built. And too many people still view the leadership of myself and Malfurion as the real reason we were able to win the War of the Ancients."

As Harry shook his head, he became aware that a lot of the small crowd, if it could be called that. The Kaldorei seemed to not believe in getting as close to one another as humans would, were now staring at him. It reminded him of being back in Hogwarts that first few days of his life in the Wizarding World: being stared at like an exhibition in a zoo. *Oh, hell no. Once was enough, thank you very much. Ugh, please don't let the Tauren react like this. I would not be pleased to be the, the constant outsider, the constant source of interest.*

"What is the High Priestess Whisperwind doing with a tiny Vrykul?" One voice said, loud enough to be heard through the susurrations of the rest of the Kaldorei.

"At least he isn't dressed like a barbarian. Although those clothes do look strange. Very unusual." Another voice, louder this time.

"I am not a tiny Vrykul," Harry shouted, winking at the one who had spoken, causing her to blush and stammer, looking away, not having realized he would overhear her. "I even believe myself quite civilized, thank you."

That won him some chuckles, and much of the crowd of Kaldorei's around them started to back away, still bowing their heads towards Tyrande but no longer bothering Harry so much with their strange gazes. A few were still looking at him, but their eyes were narrowed, their gaze wary rather than confused or curious about this new curio of this new attraction. Many of them had scars and looked older than the others in the crowd.

As they moved through the crowd, stone and metal began to appear among the building material on display. Or rather, silver, not steel. And it wasn't used as building material, only as display markers here and there, a small but intricate etching and a few disks which were obviously set up in the trees above to reflect the light of the moon down into the town. Stone, though, was used as a building material. Several houses were made out of it amongst the trees, a few houses showing stone and wood merged together.

Soon they started to see a large octagonal palisade ahead of them, and they also started to see real roads. These were not paved as they would've been in a human town. Rather, they were made of hard-packed earth, the roads creating a circle around the keep, with branches leading off in various directions.

The palisade itself was made of stone pillars and trees planted between the stone, and these were not average trees. They were thicker than even the majority of the other trees in the town. They also grew upwards taller than the rest to grow together in an intricate network that seemed to absorb the stone pillars.

Harry thought it was a fallback point for the townsfolk in times of trouble and nodded approvingly.

Right up until he passed through the gate and found himself in the training ground inside. Then Harry found himself facing several dozen drawn bows in the hands of fourteen Sentinels like the two who had escorted them her, along with ten Sentinels all fully armed and armored in scale mail, their twin blades at the ready as they sat on their bonded animals.

The Sentinel in the center was riding a massive tiger, his orange coloration dimming with the gray of age. She was taller, broader in the shoulder than any of the others, her armor full-plate rather than the others' scale mail. In her hands was a massive spear, reminding Harry of Cenarius, except this one was tipped with metal instead of oak from tip to butt. "Move away from the High Priestess, Arcanist!"

Staring at the half-circle of battle-ready Sentinels, Tyrande felt the beginnings of a headache coming on. Commander Nightshade, this is Harry Potter. He is not a small Vrykul. His people call themselves humans. He has been my companion for several moons now."

"High Priestess Whisperwind, far be it from me to question you, but you cannot bring this Arcane user into my town and assume I will just stand by and allow it!" The lead Sentinel exclaimed, a scowl visible under her helmet. "I can smell the Arcane on him! Who is to know if he used his magic on you somehow?"

"Beyond my word and the fact I have my goddess's blessing? Or the word of Cenarius?" Tyrande replied.

"Again, High Priestess, he might have ensorcelled you to say that. I cannot take the chance of this, this strange creature and the power I can see within him," Nightshade replied firmly. "Leothi, Cainor, bind his hands and muffle him."

As the two Sentinels paused for a second before reluctantly moving forward, Beside Tyrande, she felt Shy-Rotam shift uneasily. Yet her eyes were locked with that of the chief tiger, staring back at that experienced firm glare, not doing anything but not showing any deference either. She was the daughter of the king and queen of frostsabers, and as learned and powerful as this Hunter was, she would not be intimidated.

For her part, Tyrande too hesitated. She could order the commander to leave off, of course. But technically, she was still on sabbatical, and she had used being on sabbatical before to get out of making any kind of command decision, even in combat situations a time or two. It would be hypocritical of her to turn around and use her authority now. *I just hope that Harry remembered what I said about keeping things nonlethal*, she reflected, shaking her head once and stepping to the side and away, very visibly wiping her hands of whatever was about to happen. "On your head be it then Nightshade."

When the two Sentinels with them attempted to put their handcuffs on him, Quetzal appeared, phasing out from behind his chameleon cloak and hissing. "I think not!"

While Leothi and Cainor both backed away, staring in shock and wondering how they had missed that Quetzal had turned invisible as they moved through the town, the other Sentinels didn't hesitate. Bows twanged, all of the archers having instantly turned their attention on him, and the other Sentinels charged forward on top of their companions.

For all their martial prowess, Harry was ready. He flicked his hands, and a gush of wind caught up the arrows as well as the two nearest Sentinels, hurling them away. Then he was pointing his hands forward. Before the Sentinels could cover more than a single bound toward him, a wide burst of magic splashed out and away from Harry. "Immobulus."

An instant later, all of the Kaldorei found themselves immobilized. Even the leader who had leaped forward without even as long as a millisecond delay after the snake appearing was caught, her mount rearing to leap forward. "Now, if I was an enemy, I could finish you all right now." He let that sink in, moving forward and even tapped the end of Nightshade's spear, waiting until he saw the light of fear overriding the concern.

"Instead..." Harry winked, then thrust out his hands once more.

An instant later, all of the trapped Sentinels, man and woman, began to laugh, hit by the Tickling Charm. Even the commander, who seemed like the sort to never have laughed in her entire life, couldn't stop herself from chuckling, although she tried and failed to clench her jaw around it, thanks to the spell holding her still.

After a few seconds, Harry released them from the second spell but not the first one as he turned to Tyrande, a roguish smirk on his face and a twinkle in his eyes. "I find that laughter is the best medicine, don't you?"

Turning in place, Harry looked around at the Sentinels as they slowly began to recover. "Now, I hope I have proven that were I an actual threat, you would not be able to do much at the moment. So let us move on to the other issue you have with me, my use of magic. Am I what you call an Arcanist? Honestly, I do not believe so. Judging by what Tyrande has told me, all Arcanists among your race start off weak on their own and have to find an external source of power for most of their magic. Further, connecting to such a source of magic appears to act almost like a drug, and can change your people on a physical level. Am I wrong?"

Nightshade scowled, and Harry released her head from the spell, moving to look her in the face while trying not to listen to the growls and snarls of the tiger under her. Despite not having used a translation spell on him, the tone of those growls didn't leave Harry in any doubt as to their meaning. "Well?"

"Yes!" Nightshade growled out. "Magic is a drug. Once you have found a source of power enough to give you Arcane users the power you all seek, you are compelled to drink

from it again and again. Only Nature Magic is pure! You and your foul magics are dangerous to anyone...”

“In that case, there’s no problem,” Harry interjected, looking around at the others. “My magical power comes from inside me, an internal source rather than external. Nor am I addicted to magic itself. I’ll admit I use it a lot, but it’s just a tool to me.

As to my being dangerous, certainly. So is every single one of you with your great big bows and your great big arrows, and your oh-so sharp and intimidating swords.” Harry snorted, releasing some of the Sentinels who were using bows. They all looked at one another, then at Harry, but made no move to attack again, knowing intellectually that they didn’t really constitute a threat to this strange ‘hooman’.

“But that doesn’t mean I’m going to be dangerous to anyone under your command or your protection. Tyrande and I are friends, and I am willing to do my part to make certain that that friendship extends to her people as a whole,” With that, Harry released the remaining Sentinels.

The felines all stumbled, but the commander’s companion turned that stumble into a twist, then launched towards Harry, Nightshade’s tri-sided moonglaive flashing towards his new position. The other mounted Sentinels also made to follow suit, but an Immobulus spell caught the pair once more, catching the tiger with one paw on the ground, and a look around at the others stopped the rest of the Sentinels in their tracks.

“But you are not making it easy,” Harry muttered, hitting her with a cheering charm this time. “Now come on,” he snorted, holding the spell on the woman. “Give me a smile.”

She scowled, despite the nature of the cheering charm, her face promising further violence. But Tyrande shook her head, and at her gesture, both Shy-Rotam and Quetzal moved between them. Shy-Rotam, with all the courage of youth, moved over and batted at Nightshade’s leg where it was around the tiger. “You are a very silly Kaldorei. Even a youngling like me can tell when I am overmatched. **And** when I am in the wrong.”

“If you wish to continue this battle,” Quetzal hissed, rearing up to his full height, which was now pushing two stories and more, to stare down at them. “You will be forced to deal with me as well. And my ability to paralyze involves biting. Not nearly as nice as my friend’s spell.”

Tyrande waited for the knowledge that both animals had seemingly spoken in Kaldor to sink in and the whispered shock to go around the group then spoke up. “As I was saying. Cenarius came to see me in the capital at one point and convinced me to take my sabbatical up in the Winterspring mountains. There, I met Harry Potter, and together we campaigned through the mountains against local monsters called Frostmaul giants. They were a formidable enemy who had wiped out most other life in the area, and had almost wiped out my new bonded’s clan, the frostsabers. Harry is indeed able to use magic, but his spells are vastly different from

what the Highborn performed, and his heart and moral fiber are both of high quality regardless of him not being Kaldorei.”

She paused, then moving around the group, then back to lock gazes with Nightshade. “And both Elune and Cenarius vouch for him. As High Priestess, I vow this to be the case. There is nothing more that needs to be said.”

At her look, Harry released Nightshade from the two spells on her. Now released, she scowled, but, as her tiger settled back onto its haunches, glaring down at Shy-Rotam with affronted dignity, Nightshade hopped down. She glared at Harry, and Harry gazed back before Nightshade, now realizing what had already occurred to her followers, turned to Tyrande. “You vouch for this creature?” she ground out.

“I just finished saying so, Commander Nightshade,” Tyrande answered, although her eyes flashed in annoyance. *And you will be Group Leader Nightshade the instant I come back to work. That will be the first bit of paperwork I see to, I swear.* And yet, Nightshade didn’t seem to notice, simply staring between Tyrande and Harry, before throwing her hands up. “Very well, but if you do vouch for him, it will be on your head if this creature goes insane from the use of Arcane power. I want him kept far away from me. And I will demand that two of my Sentinels are assigned to you as long as you all are within my purview.”

She looked around at her command and chose out the youngest pair of night elves there, two young women even younger than the two men who had escorted them to the garrison. “Berena, Sylina, you two watch him. He is not to do anything magical during his time in this town without permission. If he becomes a threat, I expect you to do your duty.”

The two young Sentinels exchanged glances as if asking one another ‘how!?’ which Harry could sympathize with even as he took in their appearance, trying hard not to just nod in hormonal approval. Both appeared young, obviously, and dressed in brigandine armor with leather skirts down to their knees, long daggers at their sides and bows on their backs. There, their similarities faded.

One had a somewhat coltish appearance to her, nervously moving from one foot to another, with a small, barely perceptible bust, thin legs, and a somewhat thin face and thinner ears than Tyrande or most of the other Kaldorei Harry had seen so far, although she had the same gorgeous violet skin Tyrande did. Her hair was white and done up in long braids, with tiny stones braided into them. Harry couldn’t determine the color of her eyes in the moonlight, but she at least was smiling, if hesitantly.

While her companion’s face was just as youthful, she had much more mature body. Indeed, the second young Sentinel assigned to ‘guard’ Harry had the largest chest Harry could see among the bow-wielding Sentinels. Her skin was a dark, almost black purple color rather than violet. Her hair was done in two long ponytails falling down to either side of her chest and

was a pale green. She, too, was smiling, a bit wider than her companion as she looked at Quetzal and Shy-Rotam.

“Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have work to do.” With that, Nightshade turned away, moving to the small barracks nearby, her tiger following her with a final snort towards Shy-Rotam.

Harry winked at them, and Tyrande moved over to them, nodding politely to the youngsters. “Don’t worry, he doesn’t bite.”

“That’s my job,” Quetzal hissed cheerfully. “What fools these warmbloods be, to take counsel of their fears so much so that they make fools of themselves in front of their betters.”

Ignoring the sarcastic snake, Tyrande looked over at Harry. “You looked interested in some of the wares in the marketplace, or am I wrong?” When Harry nodded firmly, she smiled and gestured to their new companions. “These two can take you back there to start shopping while I procure us a ship.” She looked over at the two young girls. “If Harry finds anything, tell the seller that the temple will reimburse them if they refuse to take his payment.”

Harry nodded, bowing grandly to the two. “Lead the way, Berena, Sylina. Although before you do, which is which?”

“I’m Sylina Sungaze. She’s Berena Snowglare,” the woman with the large bust smiled good-naturedly at Harry. “Are you really able to allow us to communicate directly with our companions as you did just now with the snake and young frostsaber?”

“Help me find the goods I want, and I’ll perform the spell on your bonded too,” Harry answered, nodding his head, while Quetzal, much to his surprise, moved over to follow Tyrande. *Then again, I suppose we might get a little too crowded without Tyrande around in the marketplace, and I know he wouldn’t like that.*

Smiling happily at the idea of being able to talk to her leopard, and completely, one could almost say willfully, ignoring the fact Harry would have to cast a spell to allow it, Sylina asked, “so, what are we shopping for exactly?”

“Clothing,” Harry announced firmly, amused by their reactions, and grateful to see that Tyrande wasn’t alone in being accepting of him and his magic. “Clothing and a tent. I’ll cheerfully pay for the best tents money can buy. I do have gold coins to use, even if they won’t be in your currency. As well as a sleeping bag.”

“Sleeping bag? You mean a bedroll?”

Harry sighed. “I suppose a bedroll will do for now. But clothing is more important, and a tent. And underwear,” he added. “I need some new underwear.”

Both of the young women giggled nervously at that, looking away from Harry before Berena waved him to follow them out of the bastion, while Tyrande whispered something in Sylina's ears as she passed. The portcullis opened for them with what Harry could only discern as mechanical reluctance to let Harry escape from the fortress's environs. Outside, Berena retraced their steps on a bit of an angle, following one of the main roads rather than, as Harry and Tyrande had, coming in from the side.

It turned out that the marketplace the foursome and their guides had passed through initially was only a part of the total marketplace. Indeed, Harry estimated that the town was far more sprawling than he had even thought at the time. *Far fewer people per acre than humans for certain, and way more spread out. Plus, no outer defenses. Still, with their Sentinels' skill, I suppose they don't have to worry so much on that score.*

As soon as Harry stepped outside and into the marketplace again, he found that many of the night elves were staring at him in suspicion once more. But not nearly as many as he had feared. Harry knew that part of that was because he had arrived with Tyrande and because he had yet to use his magic in front of the masses, so to speak, but even so, it was nice to see that at least a few of the people who had been staring at him for being a different species had stopped. And as he neared them, they began to cry out their wares to him just as much as the other passerby.

"Can I ask why you need clothing?" Sylina said, looking down at his pants. "If you think you'll find anything like you are wearing, I believe you should reconsider. The shirt seems to be made of wool, perhaps? We could do something like that or better, but the pants? Just by looking at them, I admit that I have no idea what kind of material they are made of, although they certainly look to be a very hard hearing substance."

Harry glanced down at his jeans before shuddering very slightly. "Leggings will do for me. I'd just like them to be tough, that's all." He smirked then, sending a sly glance at his two companions. "And while hard-wearing, these jeans are my only pair, and I think at this point, if I took them off they would be able to stand up on their own."

Both young women blanched at that, and he chuckled but made no move to share the real reason just yet. Because the real reason was that most of his clothing these days had been transfigured from something else, transfigurations lasting much longer than conjurations. He'd gone through most of the clothing he'd been able to pack when he was with Cenarius. The nymphs and Lunara liked to play rough, and Harry had found out that there was a limit to how many times you could use a repair spell on items of clothing before they started to fall apart.

This was exacerbated by the fact that Harry had not been able to pack as much clothing at all, especially in the realm of underwear, and again, cleaning charms only worked for so long. So, Harry had taken to transfiguring some underwear for himself in the last few weeks learning

from Cenarius. But over the months that he had been traveling with Tyrande through the mountains, it had started to bother him.

Harry found himself feeling itchy in various places, scratching at his side or thighs or other places. He didn't know if it was all in his mind or a real sensation, the transformation slowly fading. Regardless, Harry could no longer get over the fact that he was wearing underwear and shirts made from leaves or other materials.

With Berena in the lead, the group moved through the town, still gaining a few looks, but nowhere near as much as Harry had feared. Soon they came to a boutique, which apparently was one of the few indoor stores. Over its doorway, a series of pictures told everyone who passed by that it was 'the Golden Weave', which Sylina read aloud for Harry before questioning, "You can understand our verbal language but not written?"

"At this point, I don't need a translation spell to understand your language," Harry chuckled. "I haven't used a spell on myself since I was training with Shan'do Cenarius. But he didn't actually have any examples of your written languages to help me learn with."

Berena laughed. "True, our Druids aren't exactly the best when it comes to writing things down."

"Comes from those bear claws they like to transform their hands into. That and the beards, they interfere with the male mind," Sylina opined, nudging her friend in the side.

Harry smiled at their interaction as he opened the door, bowing them inside. He had become used to Tyrande and her more mature, low-key sense of humor and controlled body language. These two were far less self-possessed than Tyrande and far more emotive. *I know they are older than the modern age in my own world, but I still get the impression that they are about as old as Fleur or Bill at most.*

Inside they found the first overweight Kaldorei that Harry had seen so far. She was a short, plump woman, who reminded Harry of Madame Malkin as she bustled forward, smiling, before freezing at the sight of Harry. Her welcoming smile seemed to fade very slightly, but she nodded at him all the same. "And who, or what is this?"

"My name is Harry Potter, ma'am," Harry said, deciding to put his best foot forward. "I recently arrived and decided that I needed more clothing than I already possess."

The older woman looked at him thoughtfully with her head cocked to one side for a moment, then shrugged. "Well, you can speak like an intelligent being anyway. So long as you can pay, I am willing to see if I can find anything to suit your needs."

Harry nodded and reached for the pouch at his side, which he had earlier taken out of his luggage. Pulling out one of the gold coins within, he held it up to the woman. She took it,

staring at the faces on it for a second, frowning, then moved over to her desk, where she pulled out a set of scales, which was dusty from disuse. She set the gold disc down, then took out a series of other coins in local currency, setting them down one after another as she watched the scales.

As each one landed, her frown slowly disappeared and eventually turned upside down. "That will do nicely. I will give you two gold and a silver for every one of your gold coins."

Harry nodded, making no comment on the fact that she had actually stacked four silver coins onto the other side of the weight along with the two gold. After all, he had more than enough gold to go around. *And I would be willing to pay any price to get some new underwear that doesn't make my mind think of leaves!*

With that, the woman bustled off, calling over her shoulder, "What exactly are you looking for? And might I examine your leggings at the same time you're trying some on? That material looks fascinating."

"You can indeed, Madame. I'm sorry that I can't tell you how it's made. I was a soldier where I came from, not a clothier," Harry answered as he followed.

Beside him, Sylina was already moving over to one side, frowning in thought as she remembered what Tyrande had whispered in her ear as they left. *Dark brown and maroon, is it?* She held up shirts of those colors, looking between Harry and the shirts thoughtfully, and then nodded. Tyrande was right, she decided, as should be expected of the high priestess. With that, she pushed the shirts into Harry's hands. "Try these on."

Harry looked at them, shrugged, nodded, and moved over to a changing booth set along one of the store's walls. Despite the material that it was made of, the store looked much like Madam Malkin's dress store back in his old world. Although Harry was amused to note, it had a lot more clothing in stock and far more styles available, if not types of material.

Unfortunately, denim flummoxed the store owner. She thought at first it might have come from an animal and was simply a type of leather, but it didn't appear as if it was. The zipper, though, was fascinating. She made a note of it, wondering if she could find a metalworker that could do that kind of fine work.

With Sylina's enthusiastic help, Harry eventually bought ten sets of leggings, all of them the more expensive kind, which had pockets included along with small built-up pads on the thighs and knees. Beyond that, he purchased four belts, twelve shirts, and several leather jerkins, both long-sleeved and not, to go over the shirts.

Leaving behind a very happy shopkeeper, Harry wondered about armor and decided to ask his two local guides about that. "By the way, is there an armorer here?"

"There is, but the Firetongue family aren't the best smiths, whatever they might tell you," Berena answered instead of the more voluble Sylina. "All of the armor the Sentinels here use are actually made in Darnassus . If you want good armor you have to go there, and you would probably be unable to wear any of the armor we have on hand."

Berena glanced at their odd charge, shaking her head, setting a few of the stone beads in her hair to gently clack against one another. Harry was not as tall as a Kaldorei who had yet to gain their full maturity. At the same time, he was broader in the shoulders as well as in the waist, something his new shirt showed off rather well. His legs were also a little shorter. So anything made for a man of similar age would have to be fitted to him, a harder process for armor than for clothing.

She idly wondered how old Harry was for his own race and decided that he was probably quite young. Perhaps the age where a Kaldorei would be thinking of his future profession, but no older. *Although he is certainly much more...not certain what word to use, mature doesn't quite cover it. Self-assured is closer. Self-assured and not as shallow as such a young person would normally be.*

Shrugging his head at that, Harry looked around, asking allowed, "So, where do we go for tents?"

Unfortunately, Harry discovered that not all shopkeepers were created equal. The tent seller's stall was outside its wares on display to one side. Each tent was small, well made and colored to blend into the environment.

All that was good. But the moment the possibly married couple manning the stall saw Harry moving towards them, they scowled. And when he and his companions got there, the man addressed his harsh question to Harry's two minders. "Where is this one's a leash? You do yourselves a disservice to assume that you can control it as well as High Priestess Whisperwind could without physical reinforcement."

Harry quickly turned to his minders as well, asking, "So, is this the only place we can get a tent? Obviously, they don't want the business."

Berena winced. "Unfortunately, they are the only pair who sell tents and other such equipment in town. We're not a major source of cloth, alas."

"And before you ask, we Sentinels don't use tents. We simply have bedrolls and make ourselves comfortable up in the trees," Sylina added, glaring at the two stall owners. "This is Harry Potter. He is not a small Vrykul, and he is actually quite intelligent. High Priestess Whisperwind has vouched for him, and according to her, so has Lord Cenarius."

"He's also willing to pay in gold," Sylina added tartly. "Which I assume would be more important to you two."

"Mind how you speak to your elders," the woman of the pair barked back, scowling at the two young Sentinels. Then she looked at Harry and said sharply, "If you wish to buy a tent, it will cost you 10 gold coins."

Harry didn't need to hear the sharp intake of breath from his two companions to know that that was far more than he should be paying, and he smiled thinly, biting back any desire to taunt or otherwise tease these two, shaking his head slightly. *Tyrande probably wouldn't like it if I used my magic to make these two miserable.* "And it's obvious that they do not want the business," he repeated, shaking his head. "Let's just move on."

With a final scowl sent to the two shopkeepers, Sylina and Berena led the way through the bazaar.

How long Harry spent immersed in the bazaar after that, he didn't know. But it was certainly enough to take away the taste of those two from his mouth, quite literally, because he spent most of that time sampling this or that type of food or spice, delighting in some and buying quite a lot of the spices in small bags, adding them to a series of packages that he was carrying.

As he did, he and his two companions got to know one another, and Harry learned that Sylina had been posted out here from a small community on Nordrassil just outside of Darnassus, having been raised there most of her life. On the other hand, Berena was a local girl, well known by the stall owners, and something of a voracious eater. She matched Harry plate for plate as they moved through the stalls and helped to direct him to a few of her particular favorites.

One of which, the braised fish skewers, Harry loved. Each chunk of fish stuck on the skewer between each of them was coated with subtly different spices, and he spent several moments almost begging for the recipe to the laughing delight of the man who ran the stall and a smirk from Berena. He even took several away from the stall to share with Tyrande and their two animal companions later on.

Harry did note that there was a distinct lack of dessert-type food on display. He wondered if that was because of the time of night it was – pushing dawn by this point and thus when most of the Kaldorei would be turning in - or if it was a societal thing. *Or maybe this market just doesn't have any? If they did, I'm certain Berena would already know of it,* he thought in amusement, watching Berena gobble up a second fish skewer. *I take it back. I now think she a bit younger than me,*

At the moment, Harry was pushing seventeen years of age (again). Berena, when she ate at least, reminded him of Luna, a year younger than him but somehow even younger-seeming thanks to her innocence.

Eventually, however, one of the other Sentinels from the bastion came looking for them. He was an older man who had the most magnificent sideburns Harry had yet to see, a thin, severe face and scale mail armor, unlike Harry's two companions. He took a moment to glare down at Harry for a second, who he topped by at least two feet, before shaking his head and very frostily, if politely saying, "Harry Potter, High Priestess Whisperwind has secured a ship to take the two of you to the Broken Isles. She is waiting for you down on the docks."

He then looked at Harry's two companions. "Commander Nightshade has also decided that the two of you will continue to travel with them for a time, along with a full unit of Sentinels. Broken Isles being what it is, High Priestess Whisperwind will need protection."

Harry's eyebrows rose at that, and he shook his head slightly, looking between his two companions and the man who had just given them the message. "I don't suppose Nightshade talked to Tyrande about that point, did she? That's rather like assigning a team of house cats to guard a full-grown tigress."

"I'd resent the implication if I didn't agree with you," Sylina giggled under her breath, shaking her head.

But she wasn't exactly unhappy about the assignment. Like the rest of the Sentinels, she had been appalled at the idea of an arcane user like Harry being within their territory. But her disgust faded greatly when High Priestess Whisperwind had vouched for him. Then talking to Harry and using him as a dress-up model in the clothing store and even later as they moved through the marketplace had been fun. He was so full of curiosity, and there was something welcoming and warm about him, added to a wry, teasing sense of humor that was unlike most she had seen before. All too many males of all stripes took themselves too seriously, in her opinion.

Berena had her mind on something else entirely, though. She poked Harry in the shoulder with the end of her skewer, and when he looked at her, intoned firmly, "The translation spell for our companions, please."

Laughing, Harry agreed, and the two took out their totems, Harry watching avidly at the flash of what Tyrande had called a blessing of Elune. Soon enough two panthers stood there, blinking in some confusion as they heard one another speaking Kaldor. A moment later, both were talking excitedly with their partners, thanking Harry profusely for the opportunity, while the Sentinel officer looked somewhat dyspeptic, but said nothing.

Harry supposed he had been talked to by Tyrande, before coming to find him. Or perhaps the man was fighting the desire to ask for access to the same spell, his hatred of the Arcane warring with his wish to speak naturally to his partner.

All too soon for the Sentinels they were at the docks, and once more, the construction of the docks and the surrounding wharfs reminded Harry that the Kaldorei were not human, for

all that they seemed to have many of the same types of people among their number. To one side of the large dirt road leading down from the forest to the hills around the docks, Harry could see a single large wooden door cut into the raised side of a hill, which probably was a single large warehouse. There were no other buildings around them, save for small, stonelike structures Harry could tell had some military purpose.

Below that, though, the docks themselves were amazing to look at. Fossilized wood was pared with stone, the stone twisting around the wood like twin vines, reaching out from the shore into the water of the tiny inlet. At the far end of the centermost, largest wharf, Harry could see a giant tree growing, so big it made the trees in Danaviea look small in comparison. Several large green and silver lights could be seen within its massive boughs, winking in the waning light of dawn. *A kind of watchtower, maybe? Or rather a light tower.*

Harry also noticed something else. While it looked as if each of the wharves could handle six or seven ships large at a time, there were only two ships in port at the moment, with several other, smaller boats scattered around. *A naval power this place is not.*

The ship that Tyrande had found for them was also interesting, and although Harry had no idea whatsoever about ships, he could tell that this one was built for speed. While there were a series of catapults along the vessel's sides, the ship's seemed thin and low in the water. It almost gave the impression of being some kind of bird of prey.

Tyrande awaited them along with Quetzal and Shy-Rotam by the plank leading up on the ship along with another Kaldorei. Harry estimated that this one, a man, was perhaps as old as Nightshade or Tyrande. He stood there confident and poised, his face blank, as one finger strokes the bottom of a long, pointed goatee, his eyes deep-set in his head.

His skin, too, was weathered in a way that Harry had yet to see in any of the other Kaldorei, although looking around, he saw that a few of the other Kaldorei working on the boats in the port seemed to have the same weathered appearance. *I suppose that's because they spend their life at sea?* He had read a few fantasy novels that seemed to indicate that, and the term weather-beaten came to mind.

For her part, Tyrande smiled as she took in Harry's new appearance. He looked almost like a Kaldorei now. If you could ignore his facial features. *Those emerald eyes are indeed unusual, and those small ears of his. Still, I was right. The dark maroon color of his shirt definitely works very well for Harry. It would be rather silly to wear such a thing in the forest, but it still looks good.*

"I see that you were able to procure clothing at least. You look much nicer than you did in the mountains," Tyrande teased, causing Harry to snort. Then she went on, introducing the man next to her. "Harry, this is Captain Sunstide. He's graciously agreed to provide us with passage to the Broken Isles."

A vague uptick from one eyebrow seemed to indicate that the man didn't think of this trip as something he could've avoided, but he nodded politely enough to Harry and gestured him toward the ship. If you would all board, we will be on our way. The tide comes with the dawn."

Harry nodded and mentally put that alongside the whole weather-beaten thing as a reason why the captain's skin looked a little tanned and ruddy in comparison to all the other Kaldorei Harry had so far met. Evidentially the ship was prepared to sail during the day rather than at night.

"Have you been told about our new companions?" Harry questioned, gesturing to Berena and Sylina and then to the other four Sentinels standing nearby, watching as the two young Sentinel's companions returned to totem form.

"I have," Tyrande shook her head, and if it were anyone else, Harry suspected that Tyrande would be grumbling right now. "Nightshade decided to foist them on me despite the fact I have no need of guards, and you have no need of a minder. Still, that is within her powers." *Though not for much longer if I have anything to say about it.*

The man who had come looking for Harry and his two companions seemed about to frown, but the look in Tyrande's eyes said that sabbatical or no, there was a limit to how far she would bend. His mouth clamped shut at that, and he bowed stiffly, sent one last glare Harry's way, and turned to join his companions.

Rolling her eyes, Tyrande placed a hand on Shy-Rotam's head, pushing her very lightly towards the plank. "Come, as the captain said, we should be off."

With Tyrande in the lead, they all boarded the ship, Harry thanking the captain politely as he did so, getting another incremental shift of an eyebrow.

However, Harry's goodwill towards the captain for letting them use his ship faded quickly. Because the moment they got out onto the ocean, the motion of the ship began to get to him. By the time the sun was in the sky, Harry's torso was over the gunwales, heaving all of the food he had recently eaten down into the ocean. Worse to his mind, while the ship's crew was small, much smaller than Harry had expected, not one of them looked anything more than amused and dismissive of Harry's troubles.

Tyrande was somewhat more helpful, patting his back occasionally. "I remember my first voyage at sea. It was most unpleasant for me at the time as well. But you will get over quickly enough. Quetzal, on the other hand..."

Nearby, Quetzal was curled up around himself, his head too stuck out over the gunwales, his eyes closed as he tried to fight through his nausea. Snakes did not have a regurgitation reflex, but his stomach certainly did not agree with this voyage. Shy-Rotam, too,

was a little annoyed, but that was more because she simply couldn't seem to get her feet under her against the ship's movement.

"I, I'll have to take your word for it, then. Although kn, knowing you went through the same experience is oddly th, therapeutic too. Kind of a 'y, you too are mortal' thing, even if, b, by definition, you aren't," Harry tried to quip before leaning back over the side of the ship and continuing to feed the fishes.

Tyrande laughed aloud, shaking her head in amusement, even as she winced slightly at the sunlight beating down on her. *It has been far too long since I traveled night and day if simply having the sunlight in my eyes bothers me.* "Ahh, Harry, if I ever became as arrogant in my position as Azshara, you would do a magnificent job of making me humble once more."

"H, h, I, can really feel the concern, Tyrande," Harry gasped out between dry heaves.

True to Tyrande's words, Harry quickly got over his seasickness. In contrast, the voyage only grew worse for Shy-Rotam the instant she was able to move around and looked over the side into the green-blue water. An instant later, she backed away rapidly and refused to move away from the ship's mainmast afterward.

"There's no bottom! How can there be no bottom to water?!" The young tigress moaned, refusing to even look at the horizon. Quetzal also seemed a little unnerved by the ocean, moving away from it quickly and wrapping himself around the mainmast. And none of the Sentinels even attempted to bring out their companions from their totems.

However, Harry didn't really have much time to spare for the two animals' care beyond making certain they were being fed. A few hours after Harry's stomach had subsided, Tyrande came up to him, a wooden sword in either hand. One was the match for her own normal double-bladed swords, while the other matched the proportions of Harry's sword of Gryffindor. This she tossed down in front of Harry. "Now that your stomach is settled, I think we should resume your education in the blade."

Harry stared at the wooden sword in some distaste but nodded, picking it up as he got to his feet, moving into a series of stretches as Tyrande watched, smiling faintly.

This was something they had taken up in their months traveling together, but now Tyrande wanted to start pushing their training harder. By the time they reached the high mountain clan, Tyrande knew that she would probably have to turn around almost immediately, leaving Harry to his own devices. And while Harry's magic made him incredibly formidable, he still wasn't nearly as good in a hand to hand fight as Tyrande wanted her newest friend to be. Even though her triple-bladed moonglaive was only superficially like Harry's longsword, she could still help him.

Then Harry turned to her, his sword raised. "What are you going to teach me today?"

"I think we're going to spar for today and then move on to a few forms when the sun goes down." With that, Tyrande brought her own sword up to a guard position, then without any warning or tell that Harry could detect, the high priestess of Elune launched into an attack. First came a quick thrust to Harry's chest, followed by a slash towards his leg, then another up towards his face.

To one side, Berena and Sylina watched as Harry danced back and forth with Tyrande, with Tyrande setting the tone from the get-go. Soon they were joined by the other Sentinels, watching Tyrande avidly. She was known as one of the best combatants the Kaldorei could boast, and it was obvious to all that watched, that she had not lost a step. "Good grief, I knew the stories about Lady Whisperwind, but this is something else," Sylina murmured, gaining rumbles of agreement from the others.

Although, Berena noted that Harry was doing somewhat well too. He wasn't in danger of winning, but he was still moving extremely quickly, and she couldn't detect any issue with his footwork, which was the core of good swordsmanship. Footwork was indeed what Harry and Tyrande had spent most of their time working on in the mountains.

Beyond that, Harry was very aware that he had something like preternatural reflexes compared to most humans he had met. Very, **very** rarely had Harry met someone whose speed and hand-eye coordination could match his own. It was what had made him a star Seeker during his time at Hogwarts.

But Tyrande's experience and speed were a combination that he could not hope to match, which she showed in the next hour. Tyrande seemed to know his movements before he even began them and was not only stronger but faster as well. Harry consoled himself by thinking that it was simply experience rather than natural talent, but the attempted salve to his ego didn't help much. She pinned him against the mast, tripped him up, then quickly disarmed him, going so far as to grab his sword out of the air, shaking her head. "Your left foot was too far off-center that time. Try again."

At that point, Harry was given a reprieve by Berena. She came forward asking, "Mistress Whisperwind, could we spar as well? Only, it isn't often that we have the chance to learn from someone with the amount of experience and training that you have."

Shaking his head, Harry kept quiet, knowing that line would not have been taken well by any human woman. But Tyrande simply smiled politely and gestured Berena to stand across from her. "Come, let us begin. And Sylina if you could spar with Harry? I would rather like to get him used to training against other people, not just myself."

However, something unusual happened that night, after Harry had finished training for the day. He was performing some final stretches, watching as some food was brought out for the crew, when Sylina came up to him. "So, we've seen you use a stasis spell, that tickle charm which is just wrong by the way, please don't ever use it on us again, and the translation spell.

But Lady Whisperwind says you could use other spells too. Are there any safe enough for you to show us?"

"What else would you like to see?" Harry replied, somewhat confused. "And I thought all Kaldorei wouldn't want to have much to do with magic like mine, which isn't Nature-based."

"We wouldn't, normally, but High Priestess Whisperwind vouches for you," Sylina answered. Then she smirked, her ears twitching. "And besides, I figure if you do anything bad out here, you'll have to swim back to shore."

"And neither of us thoughts to bring books or anything else along to keep us busy," Berena added somewhat more truthfully. "That, and you represent something new, which is always interesting."

Harry glanced over their shoulders at the rest of the Sentinels, who were looking over at them in disapproval. "Your fellows don't seem to agree."

The two young women both shrugged her shoulders in unison, something the two of them seemed to do occasionally without even thinking about it. "They'll get over it, eventually. For my part, I think that you're no threat to us and certainly aren't allied with the demons. You don't seem the type," Sylina said, speaking for them both.

Harry nodded slowly, then smiled, gesturing the two of them to sit down beside him against the ship's guard rail. "So, what would you like to see?" *And I'll note they aren't mentioning my runes, so I will keep those to myself. I already have one student in them, and that's enough, thanks.*

"You mentioned conjuring. What's that?" Berena asked instantly.

Despite still being on display after a fashion, Harry found that he didn't mind it so much. He tried to convince himself that it had nothing to do with the fact that the two people most interested in his magic were both young and extremely good-looking Kaldorei. They were the very definition of exotic in his eyes. But he only succeeded in doing so to a slight degree.

However, what he did do was demand that Tyrande explain the whole totem-to-living-animal thing the Sentinels seemed to have access to. He didn't come right out and say that it was something he would dearly like to do with Quetzal. After all, what the snake might say about that was probably not printable. But his interest was quite plain that first day out of port.

Alas, it turned out it really was a blessing given by Elune. "When one becomes a Sentinel, one bathes his or her hands in the fountain called Elune's Handmaiden in the main temple In Darnassus. When Elune recognizes the new Sentinel's fidelity to her service and the defense of the Kaldorei people, a vial of water that shines with Elune's light appears in their hands. This vial is then fed to the animal companion they wish to bond with. The bond allows

them to be shrunk down into a totem-form at need, and bonds the two together on a mental level.”

Harry asked a lot of questions about the whole ritual, but in the end, knew realized wasn't something he would be able to figure out how to do with his own magic. There were just too many different enchantments going on in the ritual Tyrande described, even if Harry could probably supply the necessary power.

After that first night, sparring, training and then showing off his magic became Harry's routine aboard the ship, causing the time to fly by. As the trip continued, Harry got to practice with the other Sentinels while on the ship. He found that he was overmatched by them as well, something too many of them were visibly happy about for his presence of mind. Once more, the Kaldorei proved to be superior in speed, reaction time, although none of them dominated Harry as much as Tyrande.

Sparring with the Sentinels turned out to be more worthwhile for Harry because of that. After all, losing against someone you could at least track was worth more than a one-sided slaughter. In turn, that was eclipsed by the work stance and cuts that Tyrande helped him with.

Despite sparring with him, most of the Sentinels assigned to protect Tyrande's dignity, or whatever Nightshade had thought was needed, did not warm up to Harry. Only Berena and Sylina did not treat Harry like he was a danger to Tyrande. So, despite the training and his acquaintance with Berena and Sylina turning into something approaching friendship, Harry was very happy to hear the shout of “Land ho!” from the lookout after about three weeks on the ship.

The island soon came into view from the deck, and Harry stared at it in awe.

It was huge. Harry had nothing to compare it to, but it certainly looked that way to him, anyway. It was also mountainous, a series of mountains rising higher than Harry could see. The island was also green, but not the green of the forest. This was a brighter, almost astonishing green, from one end of the island to another.

And as they came closer, Harry could see massive bits of rock sticking out of the ocean to either side, causing the ship to slow down and start to avoid its surroundings as they continued on their way. A bit after that, they started to see the port they were aiming for on the island. Although, calling it a port was extremely misleading.

Looking around as the ship entered the harbor, Harry could tell that this area had many natural features that anyone looking for a port in a hostile land could want. The area around the port was small, with hills surrounding it, the kind you could easily put, say guard posts on or something similar, and the water was supposed to be deep once you got past a certain set of four rocks sticking out of the water. However, instead of a large port like Danaviea, what awaited them was a small fishing village with a single wharf.

Which, admittedly, is pretty darn amazing looking. Harry thought, looking at it. It was made entirely of stone, unlike most of the things he had seen the night elves do so far and jutted far enough out into the water to service three or four ships the size of theirs, per side. It looked almost like concrete, but Harry realized it was made of marble, or a similar material, when he stepped from the ship. Here and there along its surface just below the water, there were glowing green lights.

Harry, for the first time in a long while, had the opportunity to use the word dichotomy in a sentence as he said, "That is the most interesting dichotomy I've ever seen: that wharf, and that village."

The village was extremely primitive, far more primitive than the town they had come from. Indeed, it looked more primitive than anything he'd seen in this world so far. Wooden huts jutted out here and there near the waterline, along with several actual treehouses beyond, with a few of the loghouses.

"Indeed. This place was once slated to become an outpost of the Kaldorei Empire under the queen. One of her courtiers created that wharf in preparation for that expansion, but the town itself was never built, and the project was abandoned during the War of the Ancients. The Kaldorei here wished to retreat entirely from our society, even after we had already exiled the Arcane among us. Many of them came to live here, forming their own small community, where they commune with nature in a more primitive fashion than the rest of my people," Tyrande answered from where she was standing beside him.

From her tone, Harry understood there was a story there. But evidently, it wasn't a bad one considering the moment they saw Tyrande striding into the town from the wharf, all of the elves there bowed, young and old. One of the youngsters, a young boy who seemed the youngest in sight, raced forward, holding up a crown of purple flowers to Tyrande.

Tyrande knelt in front of him, her movements carrying an air of formality even as she smiled at the youngster as he put the crown around Tyrande's head and said something too low for Harry to hear. As she stood up, her eyes flicked over to Harry and Quetzal, promising pain if either of them said anything.

But Harry was far too bright to go there. Instead, he was wondering why, of all the Kaldorei he had seen so far, that only here did he see old people. Several oldsters, in fact, men with long wispy white beards and women who looked like the Kaldorei equivalent of old biddies. Still, he didn't question it right now. Instead, he gestured Shy-Rotam and Quetzal forward, only to pause himself as Tyrande gestured them to wait. She then exchanged a few greetings with one of the greybeards for a few minutes.

Finishing greeting with the locals, Tyrande turned to smile over at the leader of the Sentinels who had accompanied them on the ship. "And with that, group leader, your duty has been fulfilled. Thank you and give my regards to Nightshade when you return."

"My lady, my orders are to guard you until you are back from Danaveia," the Sentinel with the magnificent sideburns said, looking a little uncomfortable.

"But the Broken Isles is out of nightshade's command, and as such, I am overruling her." Tyrande answered, her tone almost sweet but her expression stern. "I have no need of minders, and if over the past three weeks Harry has not shown himself to be no threat to me, then I rather doubt that anything will for now. Furthermore, the Highmountain clan might react negatively if I bring an entire group of Sentinels with me unannounced."

The group leader began to puff himself up as if he would argue, but Harry's next words cut through his pomposity with ease. "Of course, there is a way that they could prove that taking them along might be a good idea. They could face us in a mock battle. There's enough room on the docks here for it. If they could take on you and me, Tyrande, along with Shy-Rotam and Quetzal, then perhaps bringing them along might be worth it."

"I quite agree," Tyrande laughed, looking back at the guard commander, her head cocked to one side, her ears twitching in amusement even as she gazed at the man. "What say you, group leader Ashleaf?"

The man, whose name Harry hadn't heard before this somehow, looked pained, then shook his head. "No High Priestess Whisperwind, I am not so foolish as to try my luck in that kind of battle with you. I will not return, but I will await your return here. Is that sufficient?"

Tyrande nodded firmly and looked over at Harry. "Unless you need anything, I suggest we start moving now. I would like to be in the jungle before nightfall comes. That will allow us to get used to the forest's nighttime noises before we continue traveling tomorrow night." Being out in the day like this was not comfortable for Tyrande, although she still didn't know how much was because of her connection to Elune and how much the habit of several thousand years.

Harry nodded and turned to Berena and Sylina. "Well, you two, this is where we part ways. I doubt I'll be coming back this way with Tyrande, come what may."

"If you come through the port again, look us up," Sylina replied, shaking Harry's hand firmly. "It's been fun. And I cannot thank you enough for the translation spell on our companions."

"Agreed," Berena too took Harry's forearm in a warrior's clasp. "And your magic is still fascinating to me."

"Now I know you only like me for my magic," Harry replied poutingly, causing the two girls to laugh.

He released Berena's hand, then, without another word, moved over to follow Tyrande and Shy-Rotam out and away from the port towards the jungle beyond, with Quetzal following along. And as he stared ahead at the jungle and the mountain rising in the distance, he smiled. *Time for a new adventure*, he thought, his pulse quickening as he wondered what lay beyond those close-packed trees.