

Being a receptionist for the local adventurers' guild affiliated inn was a pretty comfortable job as far as Ayana was concerned. She just had to write down numbers, assign rooms to people, keep up with the mail, and help organize the goings on around the inn ranging from cleaning to cooking.

Oh, sure it sounded like a *lot*, and it could be considering her boss was a bit of a slave driver in his old age, but Ayana was *good* at her job and let nobody tell you otherwise. She knew the ins and outs of this inn better than the owner, she dealt with adventurers aplenty and knew how to handle them. Particularly when the dining hall got rowdy when the more 'excitable' type of adventurers stayed over.

Like right now, as one of the adventurers stood up from his chair, knocking it over and accusing the man in front of him of cheating at cards. "Why you double-timing-! I ought to-!"

"Swallow your ego and admit you lost fair and square," Ayana's firm voice said, making the adventurer freeze on the spot before he could draw his sword.

The hand on his shoulder helped.

Ayana knew how to put them in their place and keep them from wrecking the place if they got one too many drinks or their overinflated egos got bruised easily. A stern look and a warning were usually all it took.

But when that failed, her good old amazon strength came into place.

The adventurer looked into Ayana's green eyes, which were narrowed as if to say 'I have no time for your nonsense', and muttered a shaky apology to her and the other place. Picking up the chair and sitting with his head down, almost touching the table as to avoid her attention.

Amazons had a 'reputation', and just a receptionist or not, they knew not to push their luck with one.

"Hmph" Ayana huffed and went back to the reception, ignoring the looks sent her way and the hushed whispers whenever she looked at the adventurers.

Ayana's looks always drew attention, but not because she was a pretty young woman herself. Her wavy dark locks and dark-tanned skin were typical for an amazon, which made spotting her lineage a simple thing.

Though she lacked the enormous muscles associated with the women of her tribe.

Amazons were *huge*, powerful, and physically imposing. Yet Ayana was medium height and lithe-looking. A sharp contrast to her kin. Not to mention amazons were renowned warrior women who often went in search of battle for the thrill of it, yet Ayana preferred to work behind a desk in an inn.

She never explained why, and people were not brave enough to ask.

Ayana sighed and sat on her desk, going over some more paperwork before clocking in for the night. When a pair of gauntleted hands slammed over it, almost knocking down her inkpot.

The amazon sighed and looked up tiredly. "Talía..." She greeted with tired exasperation.

Which was a sharp contrast to the exuberant and boisterous voice belonging to the short-haired tomboy fighter clad in armor. "I've got the offer of a lifetime for you!"

"No"

"You haven't even heard it!"

"Is it me joining your party?"

"...Little bit?"

"No"

"Come oooooooooon!" Talía whine, laying down on her desk, once more preventing her from focusing on her paperwork. "You're an amazon, your talents are wasted here!"

"I like to work here" She ground out with annoyance. "Amazons don't *have* to be all warriors"

"But you're super strong! You must be good with weapons too!"

"That's a stereotype"

"And as an amazon, aren't you super battle-hungry and bloodthirsty?"

"And that's plain racism!"

"Come now" The calm and wise voice of the mage Elene spoke up, mildly soothing Ayana's growing headache. The wizard cap was wide enough to act like an umbrella, a pair of round glasses stood in front of her intelligent blue eyes. "That is not the proper way to recruit her for our quest"

"Should have left it to me" The soft and almost sandpaper-dry voice of the elven rogue accompanying her said. The ears peeking through the holes in her hood were a dead giveaway of her race, while the hood cast a shadow over half of her face, yet those striking amber eyes of hers could still be seen inside the darkness. "I know how to properly bribe someone," Yshla said with a sly grin forming at the edge of her lips.

"Every week you three try to recruit me" Ayana droned.

"Every thirteen days" Elene hopefully corrected.

"And *every week* I say no" She droned very slowly. "Get it through your heads, I'm not interested in being an adventurer"

"But we'd kick so much ass with you!" Talia whined. "We'd climb through the ranks so fast! We'd all be famous!"

"No thank you"

"How about gold?" Yshla proposed. "We can give you a huge cut as we'd be able to take bigger quests with you"

"I live comfortably, I don't need more money"

Talia grinned from ear to ear, pulling out a large sack. "Not even for, say, *2000 gold*?" And dropped it on the desk.

Ayana quirked an unimpressed eyebrow. "2000 gold? You lot saved up *2000 gold* just to hire me?"

"Interested now~?"

She felt a vein throb in her forehead. "Absolutely-"

"Sold!"

The four froze when a wrinkly hand snatched up the gold sack. A small hunched-over old man with a balding head and a large thick mustache that covered his upper lip smiled cheerfully as he felt the sack's weight. "This will pay for all the new banisters!"

Here was the only person with any kind of authority over Ayana, the innkeeper, her *boss*, Old Man Jules.

"S-Sir!" She stammered. "I didn't agree to this!"

"Not to worry, as your patron I am in full liberty of striking this deal on your behalf!"

"That is NOT how it works!"

"Well, you should have looked at the fine print of your contract" The small old man pulled up a parchment from his clothes.

"...This just says; 'You'll do what I say'"

“That’s right!” He chuckled. “Now, don’t you want our poor old in to get more money? We’re barely scraping by” He tried to sound desperate.

“We’re the only adventurer inn in town...”

“And I hear they’re starting a hotel on the east side! The competition, Ayana, think of the competition! We’ll need to put in the effort if we really want to stay afloat”

Ayana was too tired to poke the holes in his logic, she knew there was no arguing with this stubborn old mule...

“...*Fine*” She let out an explosive sigh.

Talia cheered, Elene clapped her hands, and Yshla gave her a thumbs up.

Ayana hit her forehead against the desk.

Ugh, maybe just one quest. Just a simple job she’d do the least possible effort and keep this trio from ever hiring her again, then get back to her simple job like always.

What could go wrong?

X~X~X~X~X

The answer was everything. Everything could go wrong.

Not only was the quest underground (always a good environment to fight...), they lacked enough supplies (because Thalia had spent most of their money hiring *her*), and they were fighting giant *bugs*.

Bugs with the bodies of pill bugs, razor-sharp teeth, and armored carapaces that bounced off arrows and were hard enough that Talia had too much trouble cutting through them with her sword. And Elene could cast only so much magic before her mana ran out.

And here she was, wearing a basic leather chest-piece, and common clothes, holding an iron greatsword as they slowly got swarmed.

Ayana came to their quest with the intention of disappointing them so much they'd never bother her again. She offered no insight into the dungeon and the things she spotted in it, did the barest minimum to pull her weight (it was amusing to see Talia losing her mind when she said she wasn't strong enough to open up a heavy treasure chest), and overall didn't really engage with the monsters that popped out of the dark corners, just doing enough to keep her true extend of her strength masked. Anything to put a stop to this adventuring nonsense.

Then they reached the nest.

And all those giant crawlies came out, hungry for human flesh.

Elene gasped as she had just finished sending another shockwave of mana in the form of luminous sunlight, making the bugs screech and scamper away as the natural light hurt them. But they knew it was not to last. "That's the last I can cast...!" She mage said with urgency.

Talia let out a string of swears worthy of a sailor as she knelt on the ground, supporting herself on her sword. "We have to go back!"

"Exit's blocked!" Yshla called out, counting her arrows in dismay as she didn't have enough of the stronger alloy tips needed to pierce those carapaces.

"What are we gonna do?!" Talie shouted in desperation.

The chittering came back, and they could spot the bugs crawling out of their holes in the walls.

They would die here... unless she did something.

Ayana's eyes were wide as the heavy realization fell on her like a pile of bricks. They were going to die, there were too many monsters here and they didn't have the strength to overcome this.

...But she had.

She could kill the bugs.

She could save them.

She just had to let go.

Ayana sighed and held her sword tightly, stepping in front of the group and leaving their defensive position.

Ayana ignored their cries of worry as she left them behind, walking toward the advancing horde of giant insects.

The amazon took a deep breath, reaching out to the things she had kept buried for so long. The rage, the call for blood, the boiling desire in her veins to *fight*.

Things she put away because that wasn't a life she could be bothered with. Ayana wanted a simple easy life where she could just relax. So she had to throw away her instincts, all the things that felt 'natural' to her.

But today there was a greater need.

The tighter she squeezed her hand, the harder her muscles flexed. Her forearms rippled and her biceps began filling the space in her sleeves.

Ayana growled and then *roared*.

She charged at the bugs with a surge of speed as the muscles in her legs flared with greater strength. Her arms burned as she lifted her sword and *swung* with all her might, cleaving through the carapace that had been giving their party so much trouble with ease.

The bug fell down squirming as it was cut in half, smelly green ichor splashing everywhere.

Ayana's muscles were swelling, invigorated by the sounds of battle and the feeling of cutting down a foe.

She roared again and struck once more, impaling one of the giant bugs through its head before kicking it away, and smashing another's head open with nothing but her fist. The arm muscles connected to it bulged even larger, her torso flared with imposing power as the muscle groups solidified and became more defined, the leather chest piece pulled tighter against her as the straps dug into her skin, coaxing her expanding bosom.

Ayana stomped on another bug, and the pant sleeve *shredded* under the sudden surge of flexing muscles, with wide quads and barrel-like thighs manifesting imposingly, the sheer strength of her stomp caused the ground around her to *crack*.

The more she swung her sword, the bigger her arms became, and the wider her back expanded into a labyrinth of pure flesh with striated lines of definition as inflating muscle groups competed for size, shredding away her clothes and snapping the leather apart with their imposing girth.

Said girth was not the only thing expanding, as her limbs lengthened and reached new heights, becoming even taller than any of the girls in her party, taller than any woman in the guild. As she struck from side to side at the incoming horde of bugs, her hair became a messy tangled mess, complementing the wide snarl of her clenched teeth.

Ayana kept killing without end, never stopping until the last one of the monsters would be a lifeless husk of chopped-up flesh at her feet. Her amazonian heart beat with fiery blood, fueling her muscles and power, transforming her body into its *true* self.

Ayana growled in rage. Rage at the monsters for making her unleash this beast she carried inside. Rage at the party who forced her to be here in the first place. Rage at her dumb old patron. She raged and killed, making a mountain out of their corpses in a way that would make her ancestors proud.

Standing atop the small hill of dead bugs, Ayana let the final creature roll down in pieces. There she stood, breathing deeply and making her thorax flare widely, with her torn clothes the only fabric remaining on her were the remnants of her pants, looking more like a tattered loincloth. The amazon looked every bit the stereotype of the rageful wild-maned barbarian, with her bloodied weapon as the bugs' green blood dripped from her unbelievably muscular person.

Ayana's chest rumbled, she extended her arms into a mighty flex and brought forth mountains of muscle and throbbing veins to the surface. Her victorious roar echoed through the underground chamber, the hill of dead monsters was her trophy, the testament to her hard-won victory.

The amazon stood triumphant.

And she *really* wanted to go back and have some tea.

Once the adrenaline wore off, Ayana sighed. She felt sticky and gross with all the insect ichor coating her figure. Ugh, it'd take multiple baths to get the smell off her. Fuck, her clothes were ruined now, she had to find something lest she walked around town with the girls hanging in the air. Well not so much hanging, they stood rather prominently thanks to the powerful pectorals supporting them. Not that it made a difference to her half-naked state...

Great, she had bulked up so much again too. It'd take a while before she could shrink down.

Giving a despondent and tired look at the trio of adventurers who looked up at her slack-jawed, the mighty amazon who had slaughtered a horde of giant insects by herself, the powerful warrior just asked:

"Can we go home now?"