

Engelian Adventures: Transformations

Book 1: Transgressions

Chapter 32

by

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Chapter 32

The other place turned out to be a throne room built by a master craftsman, decorated by a magickal genius and situated on a world where the sky, which could be seen through the pillared openings in the marble walls, was the colours of opal.

Isatics and I were the centre of attention for a court of strange and beautiful beings, but my eyes were drawn to the figure that sat on the huge, ornately-carved black throne that dominated one end of the chamber.

A man with golden skin sat upon the throne, his perfectly proportioned metallic body covered in skeins of silver jewellery, a body-hugging, black tunic and matching trunks that looked to be made of polished leather. His eyes glowed with a golden light as he looked upon us and I suddenly felt severely inadequate.

Isatics had fallen to his knees and with his arms stretched before him was abasing himself before the throne. Above the sounds of whispered conversation from the courtiers, I heard him cry out in a voice that verged on hysteria, "Oh mighty Arion. I thank thee for saving me from the dogs of Mithra and bringing me once more to paradise."

A ripple of laughter ran through the god's unearthly court and I felt a psychic echo to that laughter with my mind. Fearing a psychic attack, I threw up my defences and the whole room changed as my perceptions became clear.

Gone were the marvellous pillars framing that glorious sky. They were replaced by bone-coloured cavern walls through which twisted veins of opalescent material that glowed with their own inner light. The beings around me changed little in appearance but their language was now

indecipherable and some of them used sounds that no human could possibly utter.

Once again, my eyes were drawn to the throne. Still impressive in size, it now appeared to be rough hewn from a single block of black obsidian. Upon it sat a naked, pot-bellied figure whose skin, though still golden in colour, was covered in coarse hair, ancient tattoos and what looked like patches of black wax.

This creature was a direct contrast to all the others. He was grotesque while they were beautiful. They posed themselves to look impressive, while he exuded power slouching slovenly in his chair.

According to the legends, Arion was the first sorcerer and here was the truth to those legends. The large frame, the broad nose under the thick eye ridges on that large skull bespoke a pre-human heritage. But there was no denying the piercing intelligence that looked out from underneath those forever-brooding brows.

"Isatics," said Arion in a voice that silenced the crowd. *"Thou hast served me well."*

He reached out with both arms and two dark-haired, blue-skinned women dressed in little more than black tattoos and silver jewellery came and kissed his hands. The two were identical and their large slanted eyes and pointed ears marked them as elvenkind.

He took hold of their hands and said something to them that I could not understand. The women then climbed down from the throne and approached Isatics in a sultry manner, a predatory gleam in their eyes.

The look in Isatics' eyes was one of pure lust as the two dark elves flaunted themselves suggestively before him. Then they led him away as one would lead a child with candy.

He did not look back — I was on my own.

Strangely, the crowd of assembled beings immediately lost interest in me, to the point that I had to step lively to avoid being bowled over by a

hulking servitor with orange skin who crossed the floor carrying a whole roast animal on a platter. I looked around the chamber and sure enough, the only eyes that now looked at me were those of Arion.

He motioned for me to approach and I did so. Co-operation was probably the only way that I was ever going see Engle again.

"Thou doest not see me as the others do?" he said, and glanced down. I inadvertently followed his gaze and then averted my eyes from his exposed manhood.

"No," I said quickly. "It would appear that I am not so easily ... confused."

I had already worked out that there was an illusion on the entire chamber and that Arion controlled exactly what the others saw and heard. However, my psychic defences were such that I saw the naked reality of the situation.

"Thou art more than first seems," said Arion and raised one thick eyebrow at my appearance, *"but that would not be hard."* A deep chuckle rumbled from his chest.

I looked down at my motley collection of clothing and had to agree. Dark brown blood had seeped through the heavy material of Simad's shirt and Magus Nathaniel's dark trousers were covered in dust. I dared not think how my face looked.

He scratched some of the coarse hair on his chest and then rubbed a hand across the waxy patch that covered where a man's heart would lie. *"Thou wouldst look comely if thee were washed,"* he mused and something moved in his lap. I didn't dare look to see what it was.

"What god doest thou worship?"

"None," I replied instantly and truthfully and then wondered if I could have told a falsehood under his full attention. His voice had almost as much compulsion in it as had Donai's.

"*T'were better answers,*" he mused, and looked at me closely again. "*Thou art injured!*" he said suddenly, and sat up more fully on his throne, "*Where art manners?*"

He gestured and one of the oblivious throng stopped what they were doing and came over to him. The being was tall, over seven foot, and like most of Arion's court humanoid in appearance, but not human.

He — at least I assumed it was male — was dressed in long, dark-green robes. Initially I thought his skin colour was grey, however on closer inspection, I saw that his earless head was actually covered by a thin covering of fine grey fur. His limbs were long and gangling and he looked rather awkward as he lowered himself to kneel on one knee before the throne.

"*Yesssth mmy lord?*" the being said in a strange lisping voice. This is not what the creature actually said, but I found I could understand its words if I allowed a little of Arion's illusion past my defences.

"*Practice thy skill on our injured guest,*" he said pointing at me. The being turned its head round completely on its neck and looked upon me with strangely luminous orange eyes. I couldn't help the feeling that I was being assessed like some sort of specimen.

"*Yesssth my lord,*" lisped the creature and then unfolded itself to its full height and turned towards me.

"*Go with Semblor. He will heal thee. Then I and thee shalt talk,*" commanded Arion, dismissing us.

Semblor stalked off through the throng and I followed in his wake, drawn more by curiosity and need than by divine imperative. I looked back once at Arion to see one of his female courtiers catering to his roused manhood while the others carried on oblivious — obviously I was going to have to let him know that I was not *that* sort of girl.

I was led to a large opening in the wall of the chamber and then through a short series of tunnels to a smaller chamber. The tunnels through

which we walked were made of the same material as the throne room, but I no longer thought of it as stone, for although it was solid beneath my feet, I could feel a slight give to its surface and the tunnel wall was not cold to touch.

The small chamber to which I was taken had had its walls shaped so that there was a long bench suitable for a being of Semblor's height to lie fully upon it stretched out. Other shapes and holes had been moulded into the walls to provide other furniture and storage locations. The scatter of small items about the chamber made me think that we were now in Semblor's quarters.

"Pleassth sit down and remove your top clothes," said the giant, gesturing towards the bench.

As I moved towards the seat, I felt waves of psychic power begin to wash over me. I bolstered my still active psychic shields in response and, in expectation of some sort of physical assault, put my back to the wall of the chamber.

Semblor stood stock still in the centre of the room, his eyes large, with what might have been surprise. Slowly he started to make patting gestures in the air.

"Ssscreehtassh oohag gohwejsssh," he said, trying to calm me with what he thought were soothing words and gestures. However, the most reassuring thing he did was stop using his power. I let my defences down sufficiently so as to allow the translation spell to do its job.

"Apologiss I wass not aware that you were a ssensitive. I wass only trying to calm you," he said, motioning towards the bench again. "Pleassth I mmean no harmm. I mmust firsst ecssammine your woundss."

"Your mind power ... what is it?"

"Ssomme peopless find mme and mmy mmethodss frightening. It relaxssess themm sso that I can heal themm properly."

My wound was indeed becoming painful and hopefully Semblor was some sort of psychic healer and could achieve better results than Simad's efforts. I also decided that Arion really did want me mended for some reason. I doubted that he would bother going to such lengths if he didn't. The use of a psychic power had been unexpected here in the god of magick's realm and I had reacted badly. I moved across to the bench, sat down and started removing my shirt.

Semblor assisted me when I found that I did not have enough mobility to remove the shirt myself. This act showed me that he only had three fingers to go with his opposed thumb and that these fingers had claws rather than nails.

Strangely, I had no qualms about him seeing me half-undressed; he was not human and therefore it did not seem to matter. He proved very deft with those claws as he unwrapped the bandage over my injured ribs revealing the ointment covered wound. Dark brown blood oozed from the cut and started running down my side.

"Exsscussse me," he lisped, "but I mmusssst sssmmell the wound."

He then leant close and sniffed first my arm and then the wound, wrinkling his nose at the smell of the ointment, which I agreed was rather strong.

"Elff?"

"Half elf, half human," I replied.

"I mmusst remmove thiss ointmment and these ssutuess. They interferess with the healing," he explained.

I let him continue and he bade me lie on my side while he carefully cleaned the wound with some cloths he pulled from one of the hollows in a wall. This took some time and I found myself staring at one of the veins of opalescent material that threaded the wall trying to work out what it was.

As I was convinced that the wall was not rock, I started to think of other things that the veins might be. I was just arriving at the unsettling conclusion that the veins might have more in common with the word's physiological meaning than I was comfortable with when I felt something warm, wet and rough rasp across my wound.

I thrust Semblor away — there was not much of a body underneath his robe to resist my efforts — and sat bolt upright looking at him suspiciously. There was a brown smudge on the fur around his lips. He had licked my wound. A sharp twinge of pain made me look down and I saw a rivulet of deep brown blood wind its way down my side. *A blood sucker?*

He was picking himself up off the floor and when our eyes met, I sent my mesmerism spell surging through the connection. I knew he was psychic, so I used as much power as I could summon, which was a lot.

Frantically he tried to muster some defence, but too little and too late. He was mine to control and when I told him to sit down on the bench, he complied meekly.

"And what did you think you were going to do?" I said testily, as pain flared up in the wound from my sudden movement.

"Heal your wound."

"Tasting it more likely," I said, picking up a clean piece of cloth to press it against my side. As I did so, I noticed that the blood welled from the top end, but not the bottom where he had licked, and that the wound at that end was less ragged and seemed more closed than the other.

An embarrassing realisation dawned on me that perhaps I had reacted badly yet again. "Do you lick the wounds of your patients?"

"Yes, my saliva contains healing agents which work for both elves and humans. They work very fast," he said with hurt pride. This was a warning that I would have to be careful in maintaining my control over him when it came to his calling.

"Semblor," I said thinking carefully. "I apologise for attacking you, but you should have warned me. Where I come from this is far from common practice. You surprised me."

Acceptance of his treatment would be the best way to reduce the resistance his hurt pride would bring against my mind control, so I lay back down on the bench and told him to continue.

I noted with amusement that Semblor removed Simad's stitches with something akin to disdain after licking the wound enough to stop the bleeding. It was a strange, somewhat erotic experience to feel his tongue rasping across my skin. But the pain of the wound disappeared wherever his tongue passed and from what I could see the continued licking was bringing the edges of the wound together nicely. By the time he had finished the wound no longer bled and although it was not fully healed, it was no longer debilitating.

Semblor sat back on his heels and said "That iss all that can be done for the mmoment. You need food and fluid and my Lord Arion wissness to talk with you." He then proceeded to clean his face with the back of his hand in a very cat-like manner.

I sat up and pulled my shirt on, very conscious of the fullness of my nipples and was grateful that Semblor showed no interest in me other than the practice of his craft.

"Not just yet, my good Semblor," I said, "First, there are some things we must talk about."

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