
Scoundrel's Luck

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In the distance sheep bleated. Kesyr tipped the water skin up; the last few drops came trickling out into his open mouth. If he were out in the heat with the sheep, where he was suppose to be, it might have posed a greater problem. However Kesyr had chosen to watch the woolies, as he called them, from the shaded lee side of the beasthold. He could see the cottony white mob moving like a cloud across the green pasture, and that was enough for him.

Catching movement from the corner of his eye, Kesyr turned his attention from the flock to the approaching form. "Toraso! I was just checking down here for stragglers," He feigned a look about. "Nothing here, better get back to the flock." Kesyr managed to smile at Toraso before trying to slip back to the sheep flock. Toraso grabbed Kesyr's arm and spun him around, and slammed him, with quite a bit of force, into the wall of the beasthold. There he put his hand on his shoulders, getting a good hold on the lad. Kesyr struggled a bit, but it was no use. Toraso was a much larger man than Kesyr would ever be.

"You've been rutting with my daughter!" Toraso said. His face brightly red, it often turned that color when the man was upset. The only other time Kesyr had seen Toraso this angry was when he'd gotten his wife, Isdra, pregnant.

"She's my wife now; I was under the impression that meant I was given the go ahead on the rutting part."

Toraso slammed him against the wall again, unable to adequately vent his rage any other way. "Not Isdra, Myja!"

"What kind of cad would 'rut' with his wife's sister? I never touched Myja." Kesyr said. Toraso slammed him again if ever he needed what wits he had about him he needed them at this juncture. He needed figure out a way out of this bad situation. "Okay, maybe I did . . . a bit, but she touched me first. Quite inappropriately I might add. She is a very brazen young woman." The comment earned Kesyr another slam.

"You red star born son of a tunnelsnake! Myja is pregnant with your spawn! I was lenient on you the first time, I was a young lad myself once; made a few mistakes. I took marriage to Isdra as even compensation for your transgression. But now," Toraso's fingers dug into Kesyr's shoulders with increasing pressure. "You have gone and spoiled another of my daughters, and my loveliest at that. She would have had a chance at a decent, respectable marriage to one of the more prominent cotholder's sons. "Who will take her now? Did you think you could have two wives, like a Lord? You barely work hard enough to earn your own keep let alone that of two wives and two babes.

And if I dared to keep you around would you spoil the last of my daughters?"

Kesyr wrinkled his face at the thought. Toraso's youngest daughter was only twelve. "Give me a tad bit of credit, Toraso is still just a girl."

"I did give you a tad bit of credit, but then you went and slept with your wife's sister! Whatever speck of trust you had with this cothold has been torn all to shreds." Toraso's expression turned to concern as he thought, "I can only imagine how hurt Isdra is going to be when she finds out. If the stress you put her through harms that baby of hers you'll have to sit down to piss."

"Do we have to tell her?" Kesyr asked, half joking. Toraso didn't find the comment amusing in the least. It did however earn Kesyr another slam against the wall.

"No you are, and I am going to schedule a meeting with Lord Dracir. I'll harbor you in my hold no longer. If you're lucky my sons won't castrate you before we go."

For a moment Kesyr couldn't breath. Surely they wouldn't take his nads, but he had seen Toraso cut them off sheep, and had help him do it himself when Kesyr had first became Isdra's husband. The rams hadn't looked too happy about it. When he caught his breath, his words failed him. Every time he would go to speak his words would catch in his throat. With his balls on the line, Kesyr found himself speechless.



Kesyr had been left alone with his wife against his will. Toraso wanted Kesyr to be the one to tell Isdra about Myja's pregnancy. "Isdra," He called into the sunlit room. The young woman in the corner lifted her gaze from the knitting needles in her hands. Kesyr took a deep breath and started the conversation like all bad conversations start. "We need to talk." He moved towards her, carefully, giving himself time to mull over his word choice for a few seconds.

"What about?" Her gaze was devotedly fixed upon him. There was no doubt that she was madly in love with her husband.

"Your sister Myja, she's with child." Kesyr said quickly, hoping it might hurt less that way.

Confusion contorted the young woman's face. "I thought she was hiding something from me." She said at length. She seemed just as puzzled that it was her husband that brought her word of Myja's pregnancy. "Who's the father, do you know?" her voice gave no inclination that she had the slightest hunch.

Kesyr took a slow step backwards as he spoke. "I am, but it isn't what you think. She came to me. . ." he trailed off as Isdra's expression changed from confusion to anger. She looked away from her husband, and stared at the door. "You were getting too big to bed, and Myja can make a strong man weak with her smile, you've said something to the like yourself."

"You are a weak man," Isdra said bluntly.

"I didn't stand a chance against Myja's wiles."

Isdra glared at Kesyr, hatred seizing her mindset. Then she shifted her glare to the door, with it shifting the blame of her husband's action to another. She stood, the process taking a bit of effort in her stage of pregnancy. Kesyr dared

not to help her up for fear of bodily harm. With her mood swings, due to her raging hormones, he was threatened with bodily harm without provocation. He could well imagine she'd follow through on threats if she had a reason such as he had presented her with.

She stomped towards the door as quickly as she could. "I'll deal with you later," Her voice cracked with the intensity of her emotions. "She is always taking what is mine." Kesyr could only guess she was out to find Myja. There was no way on Faranth's green Pern that he was going to be there for that confrontation. He'd rather take his chances with fighting off Isdra's brothers then get between the two women scorned.



Kesyr inhaled deeply as he entered the Lord Holder's office. His palms were sweaty and it felt as if his heart was fluttering in his chest, the young drudge's son had never been so scared in his life. The only moment that had come close was when Kadanzer Weyr's caldera exploded coating the surrounding area in ash. Toraso had disappeared inside the office, leaving his brother Pateo to watch Kesyr in his absence. After what seemed to Kesyr an eternity, the door opened and he was pulled inside by his right ear.

He dared not to look up, and chance meeting his Lord's gaze. The Lord Holder had complete control over his life. He could pass punishment from a slap on the wrist to exile or worse. Kesyr had contemplated what he was going to say to his Lord when he was brought in front of him, but nothing seemed good enough. How could he hope to come out of this unscathed when Toraso would accept nothing less than a severe punishment?

"Leave me alone with the lad." Lord Dracir said.

At that he did venture a glance towards Toraso. By the large man's hesitation, it was quite obvious he was reluctant to do so. As Toraso moved towards the door, Kesyr returned his eyes to the stone floor.

"Your offence against Toraso's lot is no trivial matter," Dracir said, later clearing his throat. "His proposed punishment for your actions is your immediate castration, which I can't particularly argue against. Your first offense was absolved by your taking responsibility for your actions. However you decided to stir up yet more trouble instead of being grateful that you got off so lightly with the first offence. As far as I can see, castration would be an adequate solution to your kind of trouble."

"Please my Lord, it wasn't completely my fault. Myja came to me. I never forced myself upon *either* of Toraso's daughters!" Kesyr blurted, quickly closing his mouth tightly.

Lord Dracir continued, his tone harsher; reminding Kesyr of his place in this matter. "That is the only reason I am contemplating letting you keep your boys. There was most definitely foul play on your part in this, but I cannot place the blame totally upon your shoulders. I know well that boys your age are not ruled by common sense. But I cannot just allow you to return to Toraso's cothold like nothing happened either."

Kesyr heard a drawer open and looked up; the Lord Holder's brown eyes peered at him from behind spectacles.

"In my hand is a Search letter from the Weyr, it arrived just yesterday. You remember the Searchriders that weren't here too long ago, do you? In this letter I have the names of a few young men and women the Weyr has interest in. Your name is among those sent to me. I was not going to inform you. Now I see it as a way to send a problem *between*."

"You are sending me to the Weyr, my Lord?" Kesyr asked, dumbfounded by his good fortune.

"It was quite well known that your dragonrider father was a skirt chaser, it is no real surprise that his son is following his footsteps. We should see if you can follow another of your father's paths so well. You have the chance to make your Hold proud of your actions for once. Let me remind you, that if you cause any trouble at the Weyr, they'll pack your ass up and you'll be my problem again." Dracir's eyes narrowed, "You do *not* want that to happen."

"You are very gracious my Lord." Kesyr said. Relief cascaded over him as the fear of a real punishment faded. His first 'error in judgment' had shackled him to Isdra with a chain forged of matrimony. His second 'error' would send him too far for him to remember he had a wife. According to hold rumors, Kesyr would be free to pursue his greatest interest at the Weyr. The fantasy of dozens of easy to bed women filled his head almost at once. Being sent to the Weyr was more of a reward really.

"You leave immediately. Now get out of my sight."

Kesyr stepped as quickly as he could, hoping Lord Dracir wouldn't change his mind.



Kesyr was heading towards the fireheights, where brown Baseth and his rider S'toris kept watch, when he heard the voice of his mother from behind him. It wasn't the kind, caring voice he remembered from his childhood. It was cold, uncaring, and felt as though it were bleeding through her lips.

"I suppose I shouldn't have expected much better from you," Desnyra said. Kesyr didn't turn to face her. He didn't think he could take it. He knew how much his father, the late greenrider K'jen, had hurt her. "You'll probably meet a whole horde of your father's bastards at the Weyr." The wound had been torn open anew.

"I need to go. The watchrider waits for me." Kesyr responded.

"Those two girls, you're just going to abandon them? Just like that?" Her voice quivered at the end, he could tell she was holding back a sob.

"Yes. The Weyr has Searched me; I have a duty to uphold." That of course wasn't the true reason for his infatuation with his intended destination.

"Duty? Nonsense," Desnyra spat disgustedly. "After how I raised you, after knowing what your father did to us; you should know that your duty is here. Instead you are going to repeat his mistakes. What a son I raised, he does me right proud."

"Good-bye mother."

"So eager to be your father's son. I never should have expected better from you." She moved away from Kesyr quickly, he could hear her footfalls and the lingering trace of a sob made it to his ear.

The words didn't hurt Kesyr as much as his mother had obviously hoped they would. Probably because he'd never expected more of himself. Accepting who he was and where he came from was much easier than fighting against it. Kesyr always took the easy way out, in everything he did.

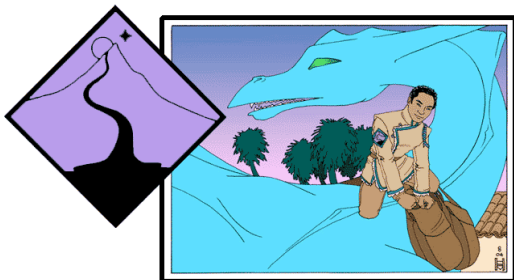


Isdra found the cool night air comforting. Tears dripped down her cheeks, her face tilted towards the sky. The moonlight washed over her light features making her look like an alabaster carving. Her confrontation with her sister had been exhausting, not that it took much to tire the young woman these days. When Isdra asked her sister about the affair with Kesyr Myja had only said, "I wanted to see if I could, women have something men will do a lot for you know. I didn't think I could get pregnant on the first time though. You said it took two times with Kesyr." Her statement was so matter of fact, and sullen. Isdra couldn't help but forgive her; Isdra herself hadn't meant to get pregnant either. Even if she didn't particularly like the person Myja had turned out to be, Isdra still loved her sister; the same way she could hate her husband's adultery and still love him.

Those words had shocked and hurt Isdra, she had never thought her sister so brazen. Myja had been raised with the same values as Isdra. They were taught how to be proper hold girls. Isdra hadn't forsaken those lessons to see if she could seduce a man, she had truly loved Kesyr. And still did, which was why the news of him leaving hit her so profoundly.

He'd *left* her here. The resurfacing thought brought on another surge of sobs.

But he cared about her, Isdra knew it. He loved her. It took a love to make a baby, it was why the act of creating one was called making love, *right*? But did that mean he loved Myja too? She forced the last thought from her mind. She had to stay calm, for herself and her baby. "He'll be back for me," she whispered to herself, as she placed a hand on her large, pregnant belly. "For us both."



Kadanzer Weyr

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