

Cantha

The rain didn't seem like it was going to let up. This was one of those all-day rains that come along during the Firma Fall. The trees were releasing their leaves in preparation for the winter to come, so the rain drops falling from the full, grey clouds had no obstacles to dodge before they hit the ground below.

This was her forest. It had been for over four thousand years. She had been cursed to live among the trees thousands of moons ago by her Queen, whom everyone had considered to be a witch. Cantha never thought that Sokara was a witch. It was more along the lines that she could wish something upon someone and it would happen. Cantha had thought about her predicament long and hard. She had plenty of time to think about it since Queen Sokara had cursed her with her immortality and then placed her in the forest. Cantha had nothing but time. She was patient. Her patience turned out to be in her favor.

King NeVada – The King of Kings – had been disgusted with his consort and her evil, wicked ways. He had banished her to the North side of Castle Castora until he could transport her to Castle Mitto on the sister planet, Gamgijar. Sokara's very presence had repulsed King NeVada. Her golden plumage had turned as black as her soul overnight. Her brilliant golden wings had become nefarious and her demeanor had become vicious and vile. He no longer wanted his Queen in his sight.

In the absence of love, King NeVada filled his heart with nymphs and satisfied his groin with wanton Gemin women. No female Gemin alive would deny her King her attention, or his pleasure. One nymph in particular was a wisp of a wench named Cantha. She had come to Castle Castora by way of Firma, the ground level of Gijar far below the noble rocks that floated above the Gijarian surface. She was a farmer's daughter. Her family supplied grains and vegetables to the castle that, in turn, the cooking staff would prepare for the Royal Family.

One day, her father took ill and could not deliver the grains harvested to the castle as was the custom. Instead of anyone else transporting the goods, Cantha volunteered to take them herself. She had never seen the castle except from the ground level on Firma. She would love to actually see it close up. She waited for the Waryn carriage that would take her from Firma up into the clouds to the floating rock above. Once on the same level as the castle, she was in awe of its grandeur. She had smiled at everyone who passed her because she was genuinely happy. The sky was blue, the sun was out, the weather was perfect and she got to be inside the castle she could only covet from below.

The castle grounds were a sight to behold. The gardens were blossoming even at the end of the warm season heading into the snap of cold. She had never seen so many feathered Gemin gathered in one place in all her life. She would usually see one or two of them as they flew down from the noble rocks to the markets on Firma where the Gemin would usually outnumber the Nobility. This time, up on the floating rock, the numbers were reversed. The Nobility were everywhere she looked.

She was led into the castle's kitchen where she would relinquish her grains and then be on her way. But, not before she took a good look at the immense kitchen she had found herself in. The castle's kitchen had to be about four times the size of her entire house. The smells were incredible. The chefs were chopping greens and shucking Firma corn, plucking fowl and skinning deer, baking pies and kneading dough. There was every food imaginable being cooked, diced, sliced, tossed, baked, shredded or boiled. It was amazing to her.

While she was being riveted by all the gourmet dishes being made prior to being presented to the Royal Family, the chopping and dicing and baking all stopped abruptly. Everyone in the room had ceased their chores to bow. King NeVada and his Queen had entered the kitchen only to exit out through the door into the gardens. Cantha had never laid eyes on the Royal Family any time before this visit. She found them larger-than-life and beautiful. Their golden plumage was a sight to behold. She couldn't take her eyes off the King. She was supposed to be bowing in respect for His Majesty, but she couldn't release the hold her eyes had upon him. King NeVada had noticed her gaze in his direction as he passed through the kitchen. It was hard not to notice Cantha. Not only was she thin, young and strikingly beautiful...she was the only being in the entire room that was not staring at the floor.

That was to become their first chance meeting. There were others to follow. King NeVada would insist that Cantha deliver her grains personally and then join him in private on the top floors of the castle in his chambers.

Sokara had gotten word of her King and Cantha's overnight stays from one of her trusted servants and favorite Ma'at priest, Xilef. Jealousy had consumed her to the point of revenge for a love that had been lost. Sokara had called upon her Waryn from the North Wing of Castle Castora to have Cantha delivered to her by a turn of the moon. This had to be done privately and discreetly. She didn't want King NeVada to get word of the rendezvous.

Cantha had received the Queen's private invitation, but declined respectfully. She had heard the rumors of the Queen's lethal engagements with others. She wasn't about to become yet another statistic. When Sokara had gotten word of Cantha's declination, she was livid. "How dare she deny me!" could be heard throughout the entire North wing of the Castle Castora. Sokara then decided she would go in search of her husband's mistress down in the town of Rayelm.

It was nightfall. The moon was waning, so there wasn't much light across the landscape on Firma below the castle rock. The Minut Forest, just below the Castle Castora and to the East of Rayelm, was blanketed in the floating rock's shadow. Sokara had received information from Xilef that Cantha's home was on the edge of the Minut Forest. That is where Sokara would find her subject. That is where Sokara aimed her intent.

Using the Sheut, Sokara had cloaked herself in shadows as she got closer to the farm house at the edge of the forest. The night was blissfully quiet except for a few cicadas singing their praise of moist, dark air. The horses in the barn had whinnied when they had caught a glimpse of Sokara in Sheut. She had noticed that animals could detect her existence, but no Gemin could. She crept past

the barn where most of the animals had surrendered to the call of slumber. One of the dogs that herd the sheep in from the fields had stirred at her Sheut passing, but didn't bark. He merely growled and then granted her passage. She figured as long as she wasn't endangering him he would let her go. His job wasn't to secure the premises; his job was to herd the sheep. He had done his job for the night. He just wanted sleep.

Her Sheut had crept up slowly to the back area of the farm house where a torch light was illuminating the room inside, but had also spilled out along the grass in a distorted square in the backyard. Her strengthened sense of smell had detected Gemin musk amidst the scents of animal dung and mold from the moisture just below the ground. "How do these people enjoy that smell down here on Firma? It's a disgusting smell." she had thought to herself as she crept along the length of the farm house. To her astonishment, she found no Gemin stirring on the grounds as she thought she would. Everyone seemed to be in for the night. Down on Firma, the night comes fast and hard. Once it gets dark, there's no chance of seeing a thing without the aid of a torch.

In the middle of her fascination of the Firma conditions, Sokara heard a yelp. It was a Gemin yelp. This wasn't a vocal alert for assistance. She knew this sound. This was a cry of pleasure. Her attention was immediately directed to the second floor of the farm house. She transformed out of Sheut to proclaim her Royal form once more. She stood in the dark in silence just below the cry she had heard moments before. She was waiting. She knew cries of pleasure weren't singular. They usually came in groups. It wouldn't be long before she heard another. Just as she was divining the art of ravishment, she heard another yelp. She turned her head in able to allow her ears to better tune into where the sound was coming from. She saw the dark window where the sound had emanated. She waited one more time to confirm that she was correct. Another yelp. She had been correct. She spread her massive wings to fly to the second story window.

She hovered just outside of the window to witness a naked man with young skin atop a young woman whose legs were wrapped around his waist. She could tell that he was young even though the light from the fire in the pit in the room was casting soft shadows across the young man's backside. She couldn't be sure this was the same young lady she was looking for. The light from the fire wasn't bright enough to see her below the young man. She turned Sheut to creep into shadow into the room where the lovers were creating their physical poetry.

Once she had entered the room in shadow, she remained in Sheut as she crept up the wall at the head of the straw filled mattress the two were pounding out their love for one another. The room smelled of lust and sweat and burnt embers. When Sokara could get a better look at the mistress below the man, she could – in fact – confirm this was Cantha, her King's nymph. Sokara didn't know what infuriated her more; the fact that her King had a nymph or that his nymph was being unchaste to her King. Either way, she had become livid enough to transform out of Sheut at their bedside.

Neither one had noticed that their Queen was standing beside them in a silent rage. Both of their eyes were closed as they paid homage to their torrid affair in grunts and stammers. It was Sokara who spoke first, "Will this be taking long? I have other duties to attend to this evening."

This startled the lovers out of their embrace. Cantha's legs unwrapped from around her beau as he shot straight up from the bed to land on the opposite side from where Sokara had been standing. The room was dark and Sokara was even darker with her lack of color. She blended right in to the room saturated with the night. The young lover dodged to seize his dagger. Sokara was a bit faster. Her left wing pierced his chest to pin him against the wall. He was beautiful. She thought it a pity that the love he stored had been wasted on this common nymph. His manhood was above average and remained erect even when the tip of her wing had just immobilized him. His bare feet were dangling a few inches above the floor as Sokara walked around the bed to get a better look at him. All the while, Cantha lay on the bed breathing heavily. Whether the breathing was due to shock or due to fucking, Sokara hadn't a care. Sokara got closer to the young man. Her senses were consumed by the spilled blood leaking out of the wound in his chest where her wing still remained. She, too, lusted after this man, but for different reasons than Cantha lusted after him. His blood was rich and alive. It called to her. Her finger found the well of his life's elixir as it dripped down his abdomen to follow the path of well built muscles around his manhood. Sokara gently cupped his testicles to find his blood dripping to the floor from underneath his sac. She lifted her blood-soaked finger to her lips. She could smell his manliness mixed with the zinc in his blood as her forked tongue found her finger to taste his fluid. She leaned in closer so that her tongue could get more of his deliciousness when she heard,

"You are not welcome here! I command you to leave this place."

That very sentence, those eleven words, caused Sokara to crash through the bedroom wall to find herself out in the open night air directly outside of the farm house. She had shattered the wooden walls as her entire being blasted through the wall with the young man still dangling from the tip of her left wing. His life had now expired as his feet dangled lifelessly below him, his head had bent back and his arms remained still to his sides. Sokara had flung him off of her wing while she was in mid-air. His naked corpse landed with a thud on the ground below amid the shattered remains of the wall that once belonged to the bedroom upstairs. She flapped her wings while remaining directly outside of Cantha's bed chamber. She then leaned forward to attempt to gain entry into the bed room once more. She was going to end this nymph once and for all. She found that once she pounded into the area where the wall had once been, she was denied entry. In fact, her skin began to burn on her forehead where her head had met the room where she was standing just moments ago.

"What is the meaning of this insolence?" she demanded of Cantha.

"You are not welcome in my home. You will leave and never come back." was all that Cantha said as she stood naked on the landing on the opposite side of the barrier.

"You do not command me, nymph!" yelled Sokara as she flew for the hole in the wall once more only to find invisible resistance and yet more pain from an unknown source. She hovered outside in the night as she stared at Cantha standing inside the building.

"You have bewitched me!" concluded Sokara.

"I will keep me and mine at a safe distance from your treachery. Be gone. You are no longer welcome here." Cantha said.

"You cannot keep me from all that is mine. I am the Queen of the Gemin!" retorted Sokara.

"You are not my Queen. You have no power here." replied Cantha.

"I beg to differ, nymph." said Sokara.

In the night on the edge of the Minut Forest, the only sound that could be heard were the cicadas singing to the moon. And the sound of Cantha's farm house as the wooden beams creaked in distress. The bottom of the house caved in to form a tree trunk while leaves and limbs began protruding from the walls and roof above. With Cantha still naked in the bed room, the floors began to shake and rumble trapping Cantha behind their wooden barrier. The room where Cantha had just been standing shot up toward the sky as the entire farm house began transforming into a giant Dorian tree. The horses in the barn began whinnying and the sheep dog gave a single bark to the noises outside of their comfortable barn.

Sokara flapped her wings as she flew in mid-air beside the tree. She was in a trance transforming the home of the nymph into the biggest tree of the forest. Once the transformation was complete, she landed on the ground to gather her naked, bleeding prize before heading back to the skies where her castle was waiting for her.

"You can never out-witch me, nymph. Never." said Sokara to the tree that had now become Cantha's prison. "You will now remain here for all eternity with the weather as your sole companion. All you will ever fuck now is the ground that feeds you and the rain that washes away your sorrow. This is where you will remain where I can keep a constant watch on you until the universe folds onto itself."

And that was the day Cantha became one with a tree. It was true that she had tried to bewitch Sokara. She, however, wasn't prepared for Sokara to one-up her. That was four thousand years ago. Sokara had visited her once or twice to gloat and to let her know the King had asked about her. But then she had stopped visiting. Cantha did have the weather as a companion, and the moon to sing to. She also had her magic. She would never lose that, nor would she ever regret being given the extended time to build her army just inside the Minut Forest. She will find Sokara. She will avenge the day Sokara one-upped her with the only satisfactory outcome being the death of that black witch.

