

Fun In The Courtyard

Arcona Citadel - Courtyard

Selen

“Did you see that?”

“See what?”

“It moved! LOOK!”

“What are you on about, Andy? I don’t see anything but a ugly old tree!”

Acolyte Andy and Guardian Gretchen, both newly recruited to Clan Arcona, stood in the Citadel’s courtyard. They both wore training clothes, and were fresh out of the Shadow Academy.

Kordath sighed as scratched the back of his neck. *Wait fer it...*

“I swear, Gretch, the tree moved!” Andy pleaded. He watched as the branches of the tree did indeed move, as if sentient on their own, but when Gretchen turned her head, they stopped. Was he going crazy? It also seemed to be closer now that he too had turned away and then glanced back.

Wait fer it...

“That tree has been their for centuries, probably!” the woman snapped back, waving her hands in the air in frustration.

Wait fer it...

“I’m telling you, it did move though--LOOK!”

“You’re crazy, Andy. There’s no way it--EEEEEEEEK!” Gretchen shrieked as the tree came to life, branches splintering and flailing like the tentacles of a great sea creature. It was making wailing noises from a mouth that had formed in the bark.

“Ohhhhwoooooohhhwoooooowooo,” the tree cried as it grabbed a hold of Gretchen and lifted her up into the air by the leg. She was flipped upside down, causing her skirt to invert, to which she flushed furiously and covered herself as best she could.

“DON’T LOOK ANDY”

Andy, who had nearly jumped out of his boots and took a few steps backwards towards safety, moved one hand over his eyes, but left a slight slit of an opening to watch the scene before him.

“PUT ME DOWN THIS INSTANT!” Gretchen yelled as she reached for her training saber. Before she could activate it, the tree-limb let her go. She landed safely with a muted thump into the soft grass of the courtyard. Scrambling to her feet, she snapped her saber to life and pointed it at the tree, which had shifted into a tall humanoid form.

Ood chuckled and held his branch-like arms up and to the sides, palms open. “Heh. Never get’s old, I tell you, Kord.”

The Rollmaster’s tail flicked behind him as he moved over to place a hand on Gretchen’s shoulder. “That’ll do, lass.”

“Ride, stallion!” A shrill voice echoed out through the courtyard. Two new figures entered. Kordath blinked a few times but was somehow unsurprised to see K’tana. He did nearly fall over when he realized *whose* shoulder’s she had her legs straddled around.

Marick Arconae looked as he always did when going about business around the Citadel. His features were locked into a stoic mask, but the Ryn could see the furrowed lines of his forehead and the barely contained twitch at the corner of his eyes as K’tana gently kicked the sides of her platformed boots into his sides.

“Mush!” she cackled.

“What’re ya lot doin’ ere?” Bleu asked.

“Hunting Eggs,” K’tana replied, as if the answer was quite obvious.

“Uh-huh,” the Ryn nodded up at her. “And’ how did ya’ rope ‘im into it?” he added as he pointed a finger at the former Shadow Lords chest.

“I have my methods,” she said, waving her hands mysteriously.

“Atyiru said that whoever wins this ‘hunt’ of hers would not be required to engage in the next...event she orchestrates,” Marick explained, his lilted voice flat.

“Ah. Makes’ense,” Kordath nodded. “How many ye’got sa’far?”

“I think we just need a few more!” K’tana said excitedly, holding up her nearly-filled basket. Kordath looked at his own basket that he was holding for Andy and Gretchen. They had managed to only find two so far.

“How did ya’find em so quick...?”

K’tana beamed. “Why, my faithful minion here has an eye for detail like a space magpie!”

“What’s a space--”

“Don’t ask,” Marick said with a sigh. He glanced over at the two Journeyman arguing with Ood.
“Scare-tree hazing?” He asked the Rollmaster.

“Yep.”

“Heh,” Marick said as he turned to go, K’tana drumming her hands against the top of his head.