They had been traveling together for months now. From one part of Skryim to the next they took on tasks from locals, all the while tracking the dragons terrorizing the holds. During this time Casavir had learned a great deal about the Dragonborn. Sharing stories over a campfire, sometimes talking into the early hours before dawn.

     It had been his pleasure to travel along side this warrior and protect her from harm and heal wounds inflicted during their battles. Nothing had ever made him feel more alive than this time with her. She was so....beautiful, even if she were oblivious to that fact or even how he felt.

     Since that night in Solitude, when too much had been said, a tight grip had been held on his feelings. Even now, when his mind wanted to turn toward passionate imagination, he held it at bay, by counting the many glittering stars in the heavens, while she slept peacefully nearby.

     Being a Paladin, this simply was how things had been. There were tricks one used to turn lust away when it came knocking at the door but they did not always work.  Biting the full of his bottom lip, a kiss seeped in, forming softly against his mouth. Warm breath fanned over his skin and he shivered before banishing the illusion. Rolling over upon side, Casavir watched her sleep, like he had on many nights before. So delicate a blossom and yet powerful.

     When sleep finally took him it was only a few short dreams before they were awake and traveling again.

     Unlike the nights, the days here in the Rift were warm and a much welcome sight after having been in Windhelm for over a moon tracking bandits and taking that dragon bounty for it's worth.

     She was elated to be away from the frigid lands, even if this part of Skryim was full of bears and other creatures that anyone could have lived without running into. Still, there were reports of dragons here and it seemed to her, they congregated in the Rift, more than any other Hold. Not that she blamed them, it was simply more comfortable in this place.

     Casting a worried look toward Casavir a grimace formed. *"We should stay a few nights in Riften, instead of make camp. You look worse than I feel... Unrested."*

*"No, My Lady. I am fine. We will travel on to the mining camp as you wished and seek out the dragon reported."*  Would his mind not wander into forbidden territory, his sleep would come much more easily, but the longer they stayed together the more he longed to be a man. Yet, doubts filled him that she would ever see him that way and he could not speak of the matter without looking a fool.

     Bothered by his weariness, she almost turned right there in the road and lead them to Riften, but he was so prideful that doing so would hurt more than heal.*"Casavir...after this task, when we take down the dragon. I could use a few days rest and...perhaps some shopping?"*

*"I doubt Riften has the fine wares of Solitude, but whatever you desire, I will purchase."* His Lady looked upon him as if he had misunderstood, but that was not the case. They both earned enough from the holds to support their own needs. Doing this for her, made him feel good, as if somehow she were solely his Lady. Even if it were a lie.

     Opening her mouth to deny the offer, she instead whispered a thank you, after staring into those soulful eyes of his for a little too long. That and if denied he would only purr at her in that deep voice until she broke down and agreed.

     Paladin or not, he could make her skin burn with want and her thoughts linger upon what to do with that mouth of his, if given the chance. Only, that chance would never arrive. He was sworn to his order and one wrong move like that would cost her his friendship.  *"You are always looking after me. When all this is done, should we both survive, I will miss your company."*

*"We survive or die together. As I told you when we first met, I will protect you until my last breath and I meant that."* Again, that brow of hers furrowed as if wanting to chastise him for offering up a life in place of her own and how he ached to touch a smooth female cheek, while promising never to leave.

     Silent instead of obvious, he indicated with his head that they should move on down the trail. The sounds of water splashing becoming more vivid with each step. There were no doubt falls nearby and he could use a bath.  *"Should we fail to meet up with a dragon or even some other creature, let us stop at the falls for a short while."*

     *"That would be nice."*  There was a bonus to his not being from Skyrim and a Paladin. When given the opportunity he would bathe and in turn that gave her the chance to do the same.

   Letting him take the lead, her eyes flit from his dark silk hair down armored form and like a young maid she blushed at the idea of him bathing. Despite herself, she imagined him gorgeous, taut and completely able to please her body.

     Glancing back Casavir noticed the gleam in her eyes and red stain of her cheeks, discovering himself suddenly jealous. That look, he knew it from the past, when...    Shaking off the pain he turned around to continue on down the path, perhaps a little faster than he ought to have.

     Gods! He had noticed and now marched on faster, fists balled up. Surely he could not read minds, but had realized by some sense or expression that her thoughts had been lustful. Rushing up along side, her hand almost grabbed his steel wrapped wrist, then dropped helplessly. How could she comfort someone who could not and would not be touched?

     Forlorn, they walked on in silence, until reaching the mining camp. There the residents were quietly questioned about goings on in the area, leading them to a letter that needed delivered a little ways up the road.

      All was quiet when they were making their way out of camp, having learned nothing important, when the crack of a thunderous roar rattled the sky. The siren was that of a dragon and they both rushed out to greet it, while the people fled into the mining cave, which was probably the safest place.

     Their battle was a long one. This dragon was not a fool and kept to the sky, only diving within range of arrows, long enough to blast icy breath along the ground, covering the land in shards of deadly cold. Then it would fly far out into the steam fields as if to recover energy for another attack. In the end, it cost them one flame atronach and nearly every last arrow, before the beast was too bloodied to continue the battle and yet they failed to kill it for it fled deeper within the marsh in a desparate attempt to live one more day.

     Frustrated, the wooden heft of a bow was dropped, her arms aching suddenly now that the adrenaline of battle was fading. Before them the land was scarred with icy rifts that had torn through the soil. Trees were overturned at the root in some places. In all, it would take a few ages for the land to heal from that fight.

     Apologetically, she sought Casavir who was out of breath as well, absentmindedly touching his arm, though it were sheathed in muddied armor and could feel nothing.  *"We will have to track it tomorrow. I know enough about this area, to not go out there in the night."*

     Coming down upon his knees Casavir gave a wane nod, before clasping his side. The damn armor had failed to protect him completely. During the battle he had taken injury, either from debris or actual ice.  *"Help me get this armor off. I fear I may have something unpleasant in my side."*

     Rushing to Casavir's side, she began to work at the straps beneath the metal hinges and slots, scared to death. He never went down like this and obviously continued the battle long after he ought to have retreated for healing.  *"Damn it Casavir! You are supposed to leave the field if your injuries get this bad!"*

     *"We leave together, My Lady."*  Shivering now, he lay back, letting her jerk his chest plate away and undo all the wrappings of leather and cloth coats beneath. Un-amusingly, this was not how he had imagined being disrobed by her, but probably the only way it were to ever happen.

     By the time she had him undone, the pain had become strong enough that he were groaning, but that did not stop her from moving his hands and yanking the shard of dragon ice from his side. It was about six inches long and very thin. Probably a rogue bit of spray that shattered off and found it's way through one of the few slits in his steel. Tossing it aside, her hands went to the wound and she used what little skill she had with magic to send warmth and mending into the depth of the tear. It was strange to see it so red without blood, for the fluid had all been frozen.

     The pain was still horrible, yet Casavir was in awe over how caring she was being, spending all her energy to see him healed. Taking hold of her hand, he stopped the effort and smiled.*"Let me finish it. Save your energy in case we need it before finding camp."*

     *"Alright."* Scooting away, realizing it must have been her touching his bare flesh that caused the retreat, she let him take over the healing and after awhile, his breathing evened out while the pierced hole in his side diminished into the smallest of indentations. When it came to mending, he was immeasurably better at it than herself, which was something she would have to look into resolving. After all, how could she protect him in the future, if this happened again in much worse of ways?"

     The sky was just a little bit darker, gathering a chill that was being exaggerated  by all the ice around them. Even where he lay had spatters of the stuff in places. Taking a breath he sat up, looking at the woman who had patiently sat there with him. Were they more than friends, he would take hold of her and...

     Coming against him, despite knowing the end result would be anger and perhaps fleeing her company, she held him tight hating how cold his flesh felt against her palms. Embracing Casavir meant a lot to her, even though this would be the one and only time, but she had to let him know that there was love for him, somewhere in the world. *"I know you will push me away and it is alright."*

     Taken aback, Casavir sat there stunned for just a few breaths, before shaking his head and returning the embrace. *"My Lady, I never planned on pushing you away."*  Slowly he shifted her weight down, until she sat upon his lap and held her like the blossom she was to him. *"More than anything, I have wanted to touch you. Make you mine."*

     When she saw the blush upon his cheeks she knew what he said was true and not just a lie to keep the peace. *"What of your vows?"*

     *"Do you need me, My Lady?"*  A soft whispered, *"yes"*, met his ears and that was all he had needed to hear. *"Then neither of us will worry and leave the reasoning and justification to the Gods."*

     Testing the water, her mouth found his and pressed a kiss. Tender and sweet it was returned and this time, when Casavir shivered against her it seemed one of restrained need. *"Come, there is enough light for us to bathe in the falls. Something I was thinking of before reaching the mining camp."*

     Heat rising to his cheeks, Casavir let her stand, then followed after before dragging her back into his embrace. *"You were thinking of me?"* Warm palms caressed his chest causing him to purr out a desirous groan.  *"Then let us do as you desire, My Lady."*          ..................................