

The Accidental Acquisition of a Dragon Egg

Davy Shakespeare



Cynuur cursed himself silently as he heard the tile strike the ground and break. He should've spotted it was loose before he jumped to it. No time to dwell on it, though. He had to keep up with Faelynn. He scanned the crowded streets until he spotted her, in that dark blue hood she always wore. The winking eye and smirk of the Wanderer was stitched in black on the navy wool. Over her she had a matching navy cloak, both to keep her warm and conceal the chain shirt underneath. At her side hung two curved daggers along with the silver medallion that bore the mischievous symbol of her deity. Although Faelynn was unassuming to strangers, Cynuur couldn't miss her.

He turned his attention back to where he was standing. The next roof was an easy jump, but he still kept an eye out for loose tiles. He leaped and landed unnaturally softly for a man of his size. He was, after all, huge. He stood at nearly seven feet tall, with a wide and bulky frame. That alone was quite imposing. Add in his sharp tusks and face tattoos, and he was truly intimidating. That was one thing to thank his orcish side for, though also one to curse. Most people mistrusted him when they saw his grey skin and strong build that showed his heritage.

He looked down at Faelynn again and saw she was still drifting through the hordes of people, aimlessly to anyone not playing close attention. Cynuur, however, knew what she was doing. She moved

from noble to noble, merchant to merchant, assessing both their possessions and their protections. Rushing to steal from anyone would likely result in a meagre reward, a risky scuffle, or both. It was odd, though, that she was taking this long. It usually only took a quarter hour for her to find someone suitable and shorter to steal what she wanted.

It seemed she was taking longer this time, so Cynuur decided to get comfortable. He sat down on the rooftop, his legs dangling over a narrow alley. He quickly glanced from one end to the other, and he immediately recognised it. The crimson bricks of the buildings on either side were distinctive from any others in Blackford. This was an alley used by many, including Cynuur and Faelynn, to travel quickly between the Meerfrau's Square and Boatswain Street. Certain criminals also employed it as a hand-off spot for just about anything.

Something looked off about it, though. Cynuur quickly descended down the brick wall and strode quickly to a weird alcove in the opposite wall that he didn't remember. It was maybe two feet high and two wide. Someone had tried to obscure it with a length of cloth, but it didn't hide it completely. He crouched down next to it and tried to peer inside, but it was completely dark. *Should I feel around for something?* He wasn't sure. The natural flow of his thoughts said absolutely not. The hole could be trapped and he'd be sticking his nose into someone else's business. However, Faelynn's voice protested his caution vehemently, saying they wouldn't be alive if they hadn't taken risks, they wouldn't have gotten anything done if they hadn't taken risks. *'After all, we do have luck on our side, Cyn.'* By the stars, she loved using that line every time they disagreed on a course of action. Sure, she worshipped the Wanderer and, alright, he clearly granted her some divine magic, but he couldn't bail them out of every risky situation, right?

Still, Cynuur was conflicted. He sighed and, before his inhibitions could warn him further, reached tentatively into the dark space. He could feel the dampness of the air and water dripping onto his hand and wrist. He felt around the edges of this small, random gap, but came into contact with nothing but bricks and grime. Taking a deep breath, he pushed more of his arm in, until his shoulder was right up against the hole. Finally, he felt something different.

For the life of him, though, Cynuur didn't know what it was. The first thing that he noticed was the light electric shock he received when he touched it. It didn't hurt, and it certainly didn't stop him from blindly examining it further. It felt scaly, like the body of a fish with overlapping rows of plating. As well as that, it was warm, warmer than anything in this hidden recess should be. It was elliptical and large, nearly stretching from the bottom to the top of the alcove.

A war waged in his mind over whether he should now withdraw and leave this strange object be or take it out. Every instinct in his head refuted the latter notion immediately; it still might be trapped, and now someone was going to **know** their business was being interfered with. Well, every instinct but one, of course. Faelynn's proactive, curious sensibilities had really established themselves firmly in a corner of his mind. Despite their recent arguments, his curiosity begged to be sated also.

Once again ignoring every warning signal going off in his head. He starting rolling the object out. It was an awkward process, and his hand kept getting caught between the object and the brickwork. Eventually though, he pulled one last time, and out rolled the object.

An egg.

One of gold, no, bronze hue that gleamed like polished metal. Turquoise streaked up and down the height of it. It looked just like it felt, with concentric lines of scales running around and around its width. He picked it up and stars it was heavy! Must be around forty or fifty pounds if his burning arms were anything to go by. He delicately placed it down again before reaching into the pouch at his side. He rooted around for a minute before pulling out a small piece of red clay with carved pictograms of talking heads.

He tapped it against his palm three times to activate it. He carefully planned out his words before he spoke.

"Hi Fae. Forget the robbing. I've found something weird in the Meerfrau-Black Street alley. Some kind of egg. Come here quick. Uh, bye now," Cynuur said, smiling after. *Pretty good, almost a clean twenty-five.* The inscriptions in the red clay glowed a bright orange for the length of the message. Not long after, it glowed a deep blue, indicating a response. He tapped it three times against his palm.

"Okay cool. Uh, I'll be there in a second. There was a really rich-looking merchant and he had no one around him, like literally--" Faelynn's response was cut off after her twenty-fifth word and Cynuur snorted in amusement. She couldn't speak concisely to save her life. Cynuur looked at the egg once again. The jagged aquamarine lines ran between the shiny, almost metallic scales. They resembled bolts of lightning, he thought. Such a strange thing. He heard quick, light footsteps to his left. He turned his head towards Black Street and saw a short, slender figure dashing towards him. Her pale skin, blond hair and purple eyes contrasted with the blue-and-black of her cloak. She stopped just in front of him, wiping a few beads of sweat off her forehead before smiling.

"Alright, I'm here. What's this egg you were—oh. Oh wow." Faelynn was left speechless after she followed Cynuur's gesture to the large egg on the ground, quite a feat, Cynuur thought. Normally she

struggled to stop speaking but this rendered her silent indeed. After a little while, her shocked expression faded and a frown creased her brow. She crouched down next to it and ran her hand across its surface, flinching slightly at the small electric shock she received.

“This is . . . weird,” Faelynn sighed. Cynuur chuckled behind her, leaning against a wall with his arms crossed.

“Yeah, no shit Fae.”

“But seriously, like, every part of this thing is strange. The colour, the scales, the electric shock, the size, the heat. Really weird.”

“Any idea what it is?”

“No. You know more about animals and nature than me, so this is your area.” Faelynn continued to inspect the egg as she spoke, taking in the colours and texture of the thing.

Cynuur rose an eyebrow. “I might worship gods associated with animals, doesn’t mean I know all about those animals.” Faelynn sighed.

“Well then we have nothing. What are we doing with it?”

“Why would we be doing anything at all? Let’s just leave it here.”

“We *can’t* just leave it! We have to figure out what it is. It could be valuable or powerful or something.” Cynuur huffed and pinched the bridge of his nose.

“Someone hid it in that hole for a reason, Fae. Do you *really* wanna get on a gang’s bad side?”

“We don’t know for a fact that this is related to one of the Syndicates, okay? And just LOOK at it!” Faelynn turned her head back to the egg, nearly unable to look away from its dazzling, vibrant surface. Cynuur paused, looked at the expression on Faelynn’s face, and groaned in frustration.

“Stars, I can’t believe I’m about to say this, but I *guess* we can bring it back home and study it a bit more.” Faelynn turned to him, a surprised expression on her face before smiling.

“YES!” she exclaimed, before dropping her voice. “About time you listen to me...”

Cynuur gave her a pointed look, having heard her passive-aggressive comment. “Faelynn, we’re not doing this now--”

She turned and stood, stepping right in front of him and meeting his eyes with a glare. “You’re the one who has it in his head to change things, so don’t talk about ‘not now’. *I* don’t want to change anything. I just want to stay here. *You’re* the one who thinks going clean will actually work, that the King’s Hand will forget all about us, that we’ll be safe. I mean, that’s ridicu--”

“No it isn’t. If we leave Einarlend, the King doesn’t have power! It makes sense!” he yelled. Normally Cynuur took a long time to become truly angry. However, when it came to the safety of Faelynn and himself he was easily incensed. Faelynn narrowed her eyes, seemingly about to respond, before dropping her gaze and turning back to the egg.

“We’ll talk more at home, let’s figure out how to move this thing first,” she said, in a very final tone. Cynuur laughed disbelievingly.

“*Now* you don’t wanna talk,” he muttered.