Breath Of The Titans: The False Titanbringer

Complete Collection

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Breath of the Titans: Little Black Stormcloud

Chapter One

The forest floor started to shake. Elven scouts clutched the trees, feeling tremors traveling up

the trunks, turning to report to their superiors. Guardians of the forest roused from their perches and

began scouting throughout the trees, trying to find the source of all the noise caused by what sounded

like a small army. They searched a wide expanse of forest as small twigs and leaves brushed and clung

to them on their shoulders and backs, until they spied dark metallic figures on the ground between the

trunks. They climbed down, seeing the bright swirls, runes, and geometric patterns carved into them. It

appeared the Titans approached, and the Guardians knew they had nothing to fear from them, the

constructs were trusted protectors.

The elves slid down the trees, going so fast that they seemed to drop effortlessly. They caught

themselves on the bark, breaking their fall feet before hitting the ground. Dark cloaks billowed around,

then floated back down to perfectly camouflage them with the forest. As the Titans drew closer to the

elves, they slowed to a stop and one turned and faced where an elder elf stood against a tree listening to

a few scouts, blending into the brown bark.

Sanche stepped forward from amongst his scouts, pulling his hood down. His hair was the color

of leaves dead on the ground, a soft brownish white, and his skin was as pale as the moonlight.

"Greetings, Titans, an honor to help you. What is it the elves may do to serve you today? The

Guardians are at your service."

The Titans stood there not answering, not moving. To the head elf, it seemed as if they were

absorbing the feel of the atmosphere, doing as he and the other Guardians would do to find anything out of place around them. Unusual behavior for a titan, but then again, this was only his fifth time meeting one. Still something felt off. The Titans were usually responsive and courteous.

Finally the constructs silently moved, but not towards the elves. They turned and stared at each other, right where the eyes would be if they carried any meat inside their suits of armor. Sanche had never told anyone, but knowing those suits were empty always made him uneasy. He knew the Titans were responsible for saving his race from the orc incursion during the Greatmothers' March, but he could never shake the nervous feeling they gave him.

Finally, the Titans turned towards the elves. One of them seemed to act normally, jovial and helpful. "Hello, elf friend! How are you on this wonderfully lovely night? Aren't we blessed to have the moon shining her beautiful face upon us all?"

The elder elf wondered what had transpired between the Titans, but figured it was something he didn't want to know. "Excellent, my fine shiny friend. It's always an honor to have the Titans in Elvenhom." Sanche replied, a smile on his face, "I ask you again though, how can we help you?"

"We need to speak with your council and Wise. Gendry has sent us on urgent business."

"No problem." Sanche replied. Turning to one of the other elves he said, "Have we any messenger birds left? We'll need one sent to Amon. Tell him we have run into some Titans, and they'd like to see him and the council, tell them the Titanbringer wishes it."

The young elf acknowledged his orders and took off through the forest, heading for their main camp.

"You don't mind if we travel with you, do you?" Sanche asked, motioning his other elves to stay put.

"Not at all, comrade. Though we planned to travel throughout the night. If you wish to travel with us, I must insist that you allow us to carry you. We wouldn't want you to fall behind." The Titan stretched out his arms, reaching to lift Sanche onto his shoulders.

Sanche grimaced and jumped back, "You give us insult!" He pointed to his scouts, "These men were trained by Tyrosh herself! We are dragon trained!"

The Titan bowed, pulling off his helm and flashing Sanche his empty innards. "No offense was meant, my friend" Sanche shuddered at the sight, "and I humbly ask for your forgiveness. It's just, I know you can't keep up with us."

Sanche smirked at the empty suit. "We'll take that as a challenge!" He said, signaling his squad to form up.

"Have it your way." The Titan said, starting to move. "We won't slow down for you, so keep up."

Sanche signaled his troops and they took off after the Titans.

Chapter Two

Bright light assaulted Lovonian's eyes. The sun shone through the archway that led outside. His mother stood next to the curtains she had just thrown wide, luxuriating in the sunlight that flooded through the open windows.

"Honestly, Love, how can you still be lazing about in bed at this hour?" She asked shaking her head slightly, "I know dragons can be a bit lazy when they're young, but I figured your father's wild gryphon-like nature would have manifested in your character by now."

Lov swung his legs out of the bed and walked to his armoire, pulling the door open. He looked at himself in the mirror on the back of the door and admired what he saw. He shone brightly where the sun glinted off of the scales that comprised his outer skin. He had no hair on his entire body, and his bright blue eyes, spattered with green particles, seemed to shine with their own inner light.

His scales were the dark, blackish-blue gray of storm clouds that form in massive thunderstorms. Tightly interlocking, they felt more like armor over his real skin than actual skin. He ran his hands against the natural fall of the scales and felt their sandpaper like quality as he considered

what to wear on this day. Today was his sixteenth birthday, and he was looking forward to a hunt with his father and uncle.

He looked forward to this hunt every year, it was their time to go out and be wild like their ancestors had been. Usually they would only go for a day or two as Lov's father was the Wise of Elvenhom. He spoke for the common people on the council and held the most sway as to what laws were passed and how best to expend the elven magic and other resources to maintain their beautiful city.

But this year, they were to be gone for two whole weeks! Father had worked hard to clear his schedule for this annual trip, and Lov hoped that this year he'd get his own bow.

"Are you done admiring yourself in the mirror there, Lov?" His mother asked teasingly. Being a dragon herself, she perfectly understood the irresistible urge to admire oneself.

"Sorry, Mother." He replied as he pulled out a forest green leather tunic and some brown leggings. "You know I lose my head every year on this day. I build it up and build it up until I can't sleep from excitement! Only to crash the day of from exhaustion and sheer pent-up energy!"

His mother smiled at him, "I know that, Lov. Why do you think I tried to get you to go play with your friends? But you didn't want to." She admonished him, shaking a finger.

"I know, Mom. It's just I haven't had fun playing with those guys since I knocked out Circo."

Lov reached down and began to lace his boots. They were a gift from his grandfather on his mother's side. The note that came with them said they were waterproof and enchanted so he would never outgrow them. As he slid them on, he felt the boots adjust to fit his feet perfectly. He decided to test them out, so he ran and stopped on the hard polished floors of his room. His mother laughed when he fell face first to the floor. Lov sat up, a serious expression on his face. "I wish I could go back and change it, Mom but I can't. And now, its like they're afraid of me. I didn't mean to hurt him."

His mother sat on the floor next to him. "It's okay, Lovonian. They're still your friends. It's just that, like you do, they need to learn about your strength. And you're just going to have to exercise more

caution when you play with the other children. You may be the smallest, but you have dragon blood, and that itself makes you much, much stronger."

"I know I'm going to have to learn to control my strength, but I don't think it will ever be safe for me to play so rough a sport with them again." Lov seemed to shrink in upon himself.

His mother reached over and gathered him into her arms. "I know, Sweetie, I know. You'll just have to learn to live with it the same way I did." She pulled away from him and looked her son in the eyes. "Come on, let's go find your father and uncle. This is just the sort of thing they started this trip for." She helped Lov to his feet and they went in search together.

Lov strode to the edge of the path he and his mother walked upon and leaned on the railing. The young half-dragon looked down towards the ground. The streets below seemed to flow across the city, as if a river made of earth passed through the trees. Lov could almost see the ground moving, running like water, here a rapid, there a smooth ford. The trees themselves seemed to spring out of the ground, reaching and stretching their pine needled branches as if to touch the sky. Sometimes, Lov would place his hands upon a tree's bark and feel it's want to float on high like a cloud in the sky. He could tell the trees were jealous of the clouds' free floating ways.

And truth to tell, he could hardly blame them. Everything in the elven capital was guided from seed to root and from seedling to tree. Even the path he and his mother walked upon was formed of the trunk of the tree.

In truth, he knew how they felt. All he needed to do was see his old guard, a Titan he named Reggie. Reggie had been around Lov since the moment of his birth. One of the old Titans, Reggie looked like a pile of scrap plate that had been thrown together and stood on display. The helm was an old bucket helm, narrow slits serving for the eyes. On it was a bright white shining rune that made Reggie seem like he had a mustache. The breastplate was polished silver with golden vines inlaid up and down the sides. On the torso and limbs, wavy lines burned brightly to form intricate patterns in the shapes of squares, circles, and triangles. The arms were of a set, copper and green with oxidation. The

legs were a highly glossed polished black. But even Reggie was not in control of himself. Being a titan, he was a servant to the Titanbringer, the spiritual leader of the free people of Heart.

Still, Lov supposed it could always be worse. Other elven children were guided to their life calling, but his parents believed one needed freedom to grow into one's potential self. That was one reason Lov wished he and his parents lived in the city of Heart, near the Titanbringer, where things were less rigid and not so formal.

His mother stepped up beside him, leaning on the railing. "A penny for your thoughts?" she asked, turning her head towards him.

"Truth to tell, Mother I was wondering why we don't live in Heart." Lov turned to look her in the eyes. "I know you and Father claim responsibility to the people, but couldn't most of his duties be handled just as easily there as here?"

His mother smiled at him, "Of course we could do that, but I don't think you realize just what all you would have to give up for us to live there."

"What do you mean?" Lov asked, thinking of all the things he wouldn't mind giving up in his life.

"For starters, the trees." She started, seeing Lov's eyes spark. She knew he loved life and all growing things.

"What about them?"

"Well, the only trees in Heart are the fruit trees in the groves, and those planted upon the temple complex. You thought the elvish trees were sad."

He jerked back, shocked that his mother knew he talked to the trees. "Don't look so astonished," she teased him. "Remember, I too am a dragon. You are just beginning to learn the extent of your magical gifts."

Lov felt a chill pass across his neck, sending a shiver down his spine. "Feels cold up here, Mother, let's go see if we can find Father and Uncle Nord."

Chapter Three

Nord looked down at his younger brother, who was busily digging through the pantry, trying to find food fit to pack for camping. The sun hadn't even crested the horizon and already Amon was hard at work. He stood a head shorter than his half-brother, but the tallness that was a legacy of their mother, was the only part of their common heritage that showed. Where Nord was thin and dexterous, Amon was stocky and strong. Nord's skin was pale as the first frost, whereas Amon had a dark olive complexion that caused some higher society elves to name him a dark elf. It was a good thing that particular prejudice had been torn from elven society. A few hundred years ago, Amon would have had his ears cut off and been sold in the old orcish slave market before he would have been appointed Wise.

Nord shook his head and banished the dark thoughts in his mind. He reached over Amon's shoulder and plucked a skin of spirits and a fat sausage from a shelf on the wall.

The younger brother turned, attempting to snatch the sausage from Nord "That's perfect for our trip! Don't eat it!"

Nord laughed at his brother, "It may be perfect for the trip, but it's also perfect in my belly!" He ripped a huge hunk off with his teeth, and proceeded to chew as loudly as he could.

Amon shook his head and went back to digging in the pantry. "Remember, Nord, we're supposed to be getting supplies for our hunting trip." He turned back to face his brother.

Streams of dark liquor poured down Nord's face as he attempted to chug the whole skin of spirits. As skinny as Nord was, Amon couldn't believe his older brother wasn't swelled to five times his size. He'd been eating like a pig for the past three days.

Amon shook his head. He'd forgotten that Nord had been gone for five years guarding the elvish border with the orcs. Sometimes manners were forgotten in such a dark place. He walked to the table his brother had taken over and reached for the skin. "Let me get a swig before you finish it off." Nord smiled at him, wiping his face with the back of his sleeve and handing the skin to his younger brother.

"I guess it's only fair, since I polished two off before you even woke up!" Nord roared with laughter. "Although, I think I may have overdone it." He said, releasing a loud belch.

Amon jiggled the skin in his hands, then sighed. "In one sitting, you just drank what would have lasted me at least a week!" Amon complained sarcastically, "I have a feeling we're going to have to postpone leaving until you can walk straight."

"It's not all bad!" Nord exclaimed in a too loud voice, "At least now you can get good and drunk with me!" Nord roared with laughter, slapping his brother on the back.

Amon, thinking of all his responsibility and the pressures pushing at him from the other members of the council, prepared to tear into his brother, rip him up one side and down the other for his irresponsibility, his reckless behavior that could very well ruin his son's birthday. Then he remembered who he was, where he had come from.

Amon had been wild as a youngling. The elders had feared he would be lost among the greater feral elves who lived in the deep wilderness far from Elvenhom. Nord was the one who had brought him to civilization. Nord was the one who had helped him to conquer his own wildness.

And here his elder brother sat before him, his first full day back among elven society, where everything was so structured and controlled. Five years along the borderlands with the orcs, you were bound to lose some polish, and while normally Amon would have lectured and chided his brother, instead he grabbed a skin of wine, and they sat down to drink, converse, and enjoy each other's company.

Amon watched as his lovely wife, Tyrosh, and his beautiful boy, Lovonian, came into the kitchen. They were talking quietly together, it sounded as though they had been searching for them awhile now. In his slightly drunken stupor it sounded funny, considering he and Nord hadn't moved for hours, so he let out a slight laugh.

His beautiful wife, with emerald green eyes and bright shiny copper hair to match her fiery temper transformed into a demon for a moment right in front of his eyes. Her hair began to lift from her

shoulders, grouping together into thick tendrils and transforming into hissing snakes. Her eyes glowed a dark red, just for an instant while she snorted a small fireball out of her nose leaving nothing but a smoke ring behind to show it had happened.

Amon attempted to warn his brother of their impending doom telepathically, but it seemed his brother had drunk his extra senses into fuzzy numbness.

"Well!" Tyrosh began in a way that Amon could tell was going to do nothing for those servants who said she was fiery. He watched as a curl of smoke escaped out the side of her mouth. Such were the dangers when you are the beloved of a dragon.

She continued, "I can't believe you two couldn't even wait to get on the way before getting drunk together! Today is supposed to be about you two taking Lovonian out to celebrate his sixteenth birthday, not for you little boys to get drunk and swap stories of bar room brawls you turn into epic battles for the kingdom!" He loved the way her eyes seemed to light with murder when she was this angry. She was never more beautiful.

Nord, seeing Tyrosh locked in on his poor brother, sought a way out without coming into her cross hairs. While they normally got along fine, for some reason his first days back home Tyrosh always seemed to have it out for him. But after a couple days and some epic battles between Amon and her, she became her sweet loving self that Nord had come to know as a sister in law. As he sneaked past Tyrosh, he grabbed Lov's hand, pushing him out the door in front of him.

The last thing Nord heard before ducking through the door was something along the lines of, "But, Honey, he's my brother and....." Nord quit paying attention and used his hands to steady himself on the wall. He looked down at his nephew and gave a little chuckle, "I don't think we're going hunting today, my boy. Your dad and I stayed up way too late and drank way too much to be going anywhere for a while."

Lov smiled up at him, "That's okay, Uncle. I figured something like this would happen, just like the last time you were home." He smiled wickedly, flashing his sharp canines. "Besides, it's more fun

to play clap and seek when you're drunk!"

Nord laughed, "I taught you well, you little bugger! Use your enemies' weaknesses against him!"

Lov took off down the hall laughing, and said, "Then catch me if you can, oh N urser of Hangovers!"

Chapter Four

Nord walked down the hallway, eyes blindfolded and arms outstretched so as to not bump into anything. "First clap!" He yelled, hearing a sharp clap from farther down the hall, there was only one door that far down, so Nord went into the room. He ran his hands along the wall, feeling the spines of books stretching from the floor to as high as he could reach. He could only assume he was in the library. "Second clap!" He called, hearing a clap from above and to his left. He felt around the room until he found some stairs that lead to an upper level. The tall elf walked around until he was standing about where he had heard the last clap and called, "Third clap."

It sounded from directly in front of him and he pulled his blindfold off to see a smiling Lov standing there. "You're too good at this game, Uncle."

"This calls for a celebration!" Nord whooped before taking a large pull from the skin.

Lov shook his head in almost the same manner his mother would have. "Who would believe you were one of the most powerful men in our army?"

Nord took on a look of hurt. "You wound me, sir! The reason I'm one of the most powerful officers in our army is precisely because of my drinking skills! Sometimes you just need to share a few rounds with your soldiers for morale."

Lov considered this carefully before asking, "What about Sanche who says that as an officer, one should remain aloof and project an air of confidence?"

Nord took another slow pull from the skin, considering what Sanche, one of the lead generals in

the army and a mentor to Nord, had said. "A good point, Lov, a good point. And during a battle I would agree completely, but when you're off duty, relaxing, it's a good way to learn about your men. Find out who likes to gamble. Find out who whores around and gets the itch, so you know not to shake hands with them. And how to find the ones with hidden talents, like Half-breed Samuel who seems to know just how many beans are in those guessing jars. I've seen him wrong just once, and that's only because they used a filling, it wasn't all beans....the point is, I never would have learned about my men without drinking with them!"

Lov reached shyly for the skin, knowing his uncle was more lenient in some aspects than his mother, alcohol being one of those things. "I've never been allowed to drink, Uncle. Mother is always saying she's afraid I'll turn into a lush like you."

Nord snorted, remembering when Lov had been just a babe. The tall elf wanted to give the little tyke a taste of their wine, and Tyrosh had squashed that firmly saying something similar. Nord shook his head, banishing the negative thought. He pulled the wine skin away, "Sorry, lad your mother would skin me like a hare if I were to let you have some."

Lov put on his sad eyes, hoping to coerce his Uncle into letting him try a drink. "Please, Uncle Nord? I promise not to tell!"

Nord felt himself wrap nicely around young Lov's pinky. He always did have a hard time telling the boy no. "Alright, but don't let your mother catch wind!" He handed the skin to Lov, and turned to go back down the stairs. He felt something slap against his leg and looked down. He was puzzled by what he saw. There hitting his hip, was the wine skin As realization of what that meant registered, he turned back to his young nephew, attempting to shout out "Wait!" But he turned just in time to watch Lov take a huge swallow from the spirits skin.

Lov felt the contents of it hit his mouth like liquid fire, he struggled to not spew it all over his uncle, but in the process, felt some try to escape out his nose. He barely swallowed before urgently gasping in air in an attempt to put out the fire in his mouth.

He learned quickly that it was a mistake. He felt the liquid fire run down his gullet and into his belly where it sat like molten magma.

Nord stood at the top of the stairs, a look of disbelief on his face, before he lost it. He began to laugh uproariously, seeing his nephew jumping up and down, hooting and hollering like a dwarf on the war path.

"How can you drink that stuff?" Lov demanded, "It feels like fire!"

Nord slowly brought himself under control, taking deep breaths and fighting off his laughter.

"Well," he started, finally getting himself together, "first of all, you tend to start with the weaker stuff, like this wine I meant to give you. Second, you don't usually try to drink the whole skin in one go."

Lov felt a little dizzy, so he shook his head. Unfortunately, that didn't help matters. The room slowly began to spin. He tried swinging his head in the opposite direction to counter it, but only succeeded in making everything spin the other way.

Nord reached out and steadied his nephew, forcing him to sit on the stairs. "Don't worry, Lov. You'll get used to it in a moment." He sat next to his nephew, and pulled some bread and cheese from his pouch. "Here, eat this. It will help." Lov received half a loaf of travel bread and a generous hunk of cheese gratefully, and gobbled it up almost as fast as it hit his hands.

"Damn," Nord said with a start, "I've seen men starved for days who wouldn't of been able to inhale all that like you did! Do they not feed you here or something?"

Lov smiled shyly, "Sorry, Mother says I have the appetite of my grandfather. Something about eating everything in the house in one go. It felt good though. I don't really get to fill up often. I mean, I'm not starved, but I always hunger for more. Not just food either, Uncle."

Nord had spent a handful of years hunting great Wyrms, on the other side of the world. They were the dragons that couldn't master their appetites. One thing he admired about Tyrosh was her ability to not give in to her dragonhunger. It appeared young Lov still had some lessons to learn. Now the tall elf felt a little guilty about sneaking his only nephew some of the spirits. "How are you feeling

now?" Nord asked.

Lov thought for a moment. "I still feel like there's a fire in my gut, but at least the spinning stopped." He slowly stood up, and using the banister, made his way down the stairs. "Let's go find my parents."

Nord followed him down the stairs and out into the hallway. They passed back through the kitchens, looking for clues to their direction. A young elf maid pressed large bowls of rice and vegetables into their hands and all but forced them to sit down and eat while she found the mistress of the house.

A short time later, Tyrosh strode forcefully into the kitchen, all but crackling with lightning.

Some of her hair was even standing up, forming long sweeping wings off her head.

Nord prepared himself for a barrage about the disorder he had caused in her house, the same kind of thing he always got after returning home from a long journey. It was how he knew she cared. If she were to ignore him, he'd fear for his life.

"I think I owe you an apology." Tyrosh said calmly, totally at odds with how she looked. Nord felt a chill up his spine. "As my husband pointed out, you are his brother, and you've been gone a long time. I suppose I should excuse some mannerisms while you get back to being comfortable."

Nord stood slowly and began to creep towards the closest exit. "Don't make any sudden moves, boy, but I suggest you run!" his uncle roared, sprinting out of the room.

Lov burst out in laughter, seeing the stunned look on his mother's face.

Nord hesitantly peeked his head in the door to see Tyrosh's reaction. At first her face turned beet red and later he would swear that smoke had come out of her ears, before she burst out laughing. She had pictured giving into her anger and exploding into a magical ball of fury! It seemed comical seeing Nord, ever brave and not afraid, grab a dragon by the tail.

Everything seemed okay, and Nord walked back to the table. "Sorry, Tyrosh, just trying to use a bit of humor."

She smiled at him, "It's okay, Nord. I know a lot of times I'm a stick in the mud, but it comes with the territory when you have to maintain such control. It's hard to surrender it when you've had so many friends lose themselves to a single vice." She hugged her son close, "That's why he's my treasure."

Lov blushed, his skin flushing until it was almost black, saying, "Stop it, Mom!"

"I'll try to keep that in mind, Tyrosh. Sometimes I can't help it though, the flighty nature of my father." Nord stretched for the ceiling, then relaxed in his chair.

"Speaking of fathers," she said, turning to Lov, "I'm sorry, Honey, but your father isn't going to be able to go tomorrow. Apparently there's a contingent of Titans headed to Elvenhom, and the other members of the council have decided that they just can't survive even one damned day without the Wise there."

Now Nord understood why Tyrosh had been upset. All night, Amon had talked about the bow he had ordered from the master bow smith. It was made with new technology from Heart's central priesthood. Called a re-curve bow, it was said to shoot almost as far as one of the elven longbows with a third less pull, and only be half as tall. It would be a bit tall for Lov, but he would grow into it.

Lov nodded his head solemnly, "That's okay, Mom. He's responsible for more than just me. Even if I do wish I could be selfish with him."

"I'm glad you understand, my son." Amon said, carrying a wrapped package into the kitchen. "I was going to wait until tomorrow when we were out hunting to give this to you, but those plans were spoiled. I'll just have to give it to you now." He handed the gift to Lov, who unwrapped it carefully.

Amon had described the bow to Nord during the night, but none of his descriptions did it justice. It looked carved from marble of brown and black, the colors ranging from a sweet honey to a thick molasses. When Lov stood with it, it suited him. By size it was large, but Lov made it fit him.

Love shone from Lov's eyes, and by the overwhelming sense of love and thanks he sensed from his son, Amon knew he had chosen well.

An odd look passed across Lov's face and he carefully set the bow down. Motioning to Nord, he walked out of the kitchen and into the hallway.

"What's wrong?" Nord asked, shocked that his nephew had let the bow out of his sight.

"That fire in my belly isn't feeling so good!" The young half-dragon said with urgency to his uncle.

And of course, for Nord's sake, Tyrosh had to choose this moment to follow her son. She walked through the door asking, "What's wrong, my little storm cloud?" right as Lov began to bring up the contents of his stomach.

It burned and sizzled as it set the wood of the floor on fire. Tyrosh's eyes flared and a burst of frosty air whipped by Nord, freezing the fire and the contents of her son's stomach. She stepped forward and broke a chunk of the ice off shoving it in her mouth. Her eyes flashed again and Nord felt coldness on his feet.

"You gave my son spirits!" She spat angrily, momentarily losing control of her temper causing her pupils to shape like a reptile's. "He is a young dragon, not ready yet to test his greed!" She screamed in fury. Nord felt the heat of a forge in her breath.

Amon hurried to save his brother from his wife's fiery breath and temper. "He meant nothing by it, Tyrosh. It's a wilder thing, from our not too distant past. He doesn't know what alcohol does to dragons."

Nord tried to move his feet and almost fell on his face. He had forgotten about the ice on them. "What does it do?" He asked, afraid he might have truly screwed up.

"It makes their hunger be felt more keenly. Brings it to the front of the mind." Amon told his brother his voice full of disappointment.

"I'm sorry, Tyrosh. I didn't know." Nord said innocently. "At least I'll be taking the boy away.

He won't be at home to fall back on his creature comforts."

Tyrosh's eyes narrowed slightly, her nostrils flaring, but Nord took it as a good sign that no

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