

# Quickfingers

Late in the 4<sup>th</sup> world there was a kingdom called Tir Tangier. A kingdom run by elves. This kingdom was fiercely guarding its borders from the encroaching presence of orcs, trolls, dwarves, and humans. The hatred for the other races and sub-races of these creatures kept the kingdom executing any trespassers.

The king of the elves was quick to anger. Especially if it was from elves pulling away from the social norm from the traditions of the great and powerful kingdom. Everything was about showing the strength of the elves. Everything was about showing the uniformity of the elves and their tradition. If the other kingdoms saw anything wavering, the ensuing battle would reap havoc on the kingdom. War hasn't been seen on these lands for generations.

The king, a dark haired elf who was more charismatic than any elf before him, looked at his daughter. Speaking in Sperethiel, "Darling, your tendencies are not welcome in this kingdom. You must marry a prince from a noble family. I won't hear anything else of it."

"Father, I love her." The young elven princess was crying. "I don't have any feelings for these males you keep putting in front of me."

"Feelings mean nothing. You will do your duty and marry the next one that I send. It will bring more strength to our family and our kingdom. If I find out you are still seeing that cook creature, I will have her hung for abusing the princess."

"Father!" she screamed and stormed out of the throne room. There was almost no one in the room, just the court jester and the king's squire. The king looked at them both and said, "You heard nothing if you want to keep your heads. Do you understand?"

Both elves nodded. The king smiled. "Harlequin, Tell me one of your stories."

Harlequin said, "Yes sire" and started off on a story.

The princess ran down the corridor to her girlfriend's room. She pounded on the door, which was quickly opened. "Silverleaf," she sobbed falling into the arms of the young cook. "My father said I have to marry a prince and can't see you anymore."

"You knew that this would come. He is old and has his traditions."

"I know. I was hoping he would open his eyes and see what we have. I love you so much, I don't want anyone else even touching me."

"I love you too princess." She smiled slyly.

"I keep telling you not to call me that when we are alone." The princess playfully slapped the shoulder of her girlfriend.

They kissed. "What are we going to do?" Silverleaf asked. "He is the king, you are the princess. Expectations are what they are."

"We could leave." The princess said. "Run far away from this place and go somewhere that we could live together happily forever."

"You know that everyone hates the elves because of how your father runs this kingdom."

"I know. We need to find a solution. Until then, we can't be seen together. My father said he would have you killed if you are seen with me again."

Frowning Silverleaf stated, "Then we can't be found together." She giggled and pulled on the princess's gown.

"I can't right now." The princess said sadly, "I have to get to my room or he will come looking for me. I think I may have a plan, but it will take some work and some luck, and even a little deceit from an old friend of the kings to make it work."

Silverleaf bowed slightly, "Yes my princess." She looked up and smiled at the princess's frown.

The princess kissed her passionately and fled down the hall to her own quarters.

That night the princess stayed up all night planning and scheming to find a way for her and her lover to be together. She finally falls asleep.

The next day she gets up and rushes out of her room, a sly smile on her face.

She ran down to the hall to the throne room knowing her father wouldn't be out and about yet.

She entered the throne room, looking around seeing only one person in here. The lone figure sitting on the throne and it wasn't her father. The jester Harlequin stood suddenly as if he got caught eating the last biscuit at the kings table.

"Princess, please forgive me. I like to come in and think in the mornings."

"Please don't patronize me. I know you have inspirations to be more than the jester of the king, as you should." She smiled at him.

"What can I do for you princess?"

"I need a spell from you."

"I am not one of the king's mages."

"I know, but you are a powerful mage. I have heard of your wasted talents from the other mages."

Harlequin smiled smugly, "And what kind of spell would you have me cast? Juggling cats? Invisibility on the king's dogs?"

She glared at him, "No, nothing so trite. I want to go to a place where Silverleaf and I can live out our lives in peace, away from the prejudice of my father. I am coming to you because you have always been open minded about our relationship."

His smile got broader, "Of course princess." His own desires obvious in his face and a cunning that could be heard in his voice. "It will take me a day or two to devise the right spell. When it is ready I will send a blue rose to your quarters on your meal tray."

“Thank you, you don’t know how much this means to me.” I stated honestly.

Bowing deeply, “Your highness, I think you don’t know what this means to me to be able to help you escape your gilded prison.”

The princess went to the dining hall, where her family would be gathering already.

The breakfast was mostly pleasant. The king was talking to the queen. The children, 2 princes and 2 princesses, were chatting amongst themselves. As the eldest child it was expected that she would be married soon to unite two kingdoms.

That was not going to happen. Soon things would change.

A few days had passed and the princess was getting anxious. Her father was starting to plan a wedding for her, her mother was picking out the colors, dress, and all things a highborn queen does when her eldest daughter is going to be married. The princess was playing along, but on the inside she was dying a little each day.

Finally, her afternoon meal was delivered to her quarters with a blue rose on the tray. Today was the day she was to finish the plans with the jester. Beaming with happiness and pride, for not getting caught by her parents, she ran out of the room without eating anything.

She ran all the way to the tower where the jester lived, up 8 flights of stairs, and knocked on his door.

Harlequin opened his door and smiled, his face already painted for the days tasks creating an illusion of an even bigger smile. “Princess, do come inside.”

She hurried in and he closed the door behind him. Then he waved his hand in a funny motion while chanting a little. “Now no one can hear what we have to say my child.”

The princess cringed at that, she hated it when he called her that. He was over 100 years older than she was, but he didn’t need to call her a child. She was 75 after all, and about to be marred.

“You sent the message? I assume you have a way to get me and Silverleaf out of my father’s kingdom and somewhere that isn’t so closed minded about our relationship?”

“Yes I did. It will take some work and sacrifice from all of us involved, but I can get you someplace more, tolerant to your relationship.” His smile thinned out to a sly grin. “I will need a few things that I can’t get from you.” He handed her a piece of paper. On the parchment his flowing and flowery handwriting listed three items. They are:

1. A small piece of Orichalcum.
2. A silver plated mirror.
3. Blood from both the princess and Silverleaf.

The princess shivered at the list when she read blood. “Why do we need to give you blood?”

“Because my Princess, everyone will sacrifice something to make this spell work. You and Silverleaf must supply some blood or the ritual will fail.”

“I can have these things tonight, Silverleaf and I are ready to go.”

“Meet me in the bell tower when the moon is high in the sky and the castle slumbers.” His speech getting flowery once again as he starts to prepare for his day with the king.

“It will be done sir. Thank you.”

“Thank you Princess for letting me help you.” He bowed deeply. “You have my respect, and I wish you the best after today.”

With that the princess left. She first went to her father’s quarters where she knew he had some of the precious metal that was on the list. A few chunks the size of a coin were in his drawer. She took one and left, not being spotted.

Next she went to the kitchen. Silverleaf was working. Silverleaf smiled when the princess walked in as she started looking down to her work. The princess strode up to her and whispered, “Tonight, meet me in the hall outside the bell tower. After all but the guards are asleep.” Then she said in a louder voice, “Do we have any churned butter for a roll? I am famished and would love some buttered bread.”

A few head turned at the sound of one of the royals. No one noticed the previous conversation as the princess took a roll and buttered it. She started eating it before walking out of the kitchen.

The rest of the day she was on cloud nine. Floating through the day, all smiles and joy. The queen noticed this and talked to her daughter.

“<name removed for secrecy reasons> why are you so happy this day?”

“I am just loving the day. Sunny day, birds singing, good food, strong family, it’s just a good day.”

“Okay my dear, I want to have you over tonight for measurements for your dress. I think you will be a beautiful bride, and a wonderful queen when the time comes.”

She smiled at her mother, “Thank you mother. I will be there after dinner. I would like to turn in early tonight because of the planning scheduled for tomorrow.”

“I understand, I won’t keep you too long. I have the master tailor coming over tonight and I would prefer to get your measurements at the same time.”

“Of course mother.” She smiled and ducked out.

The rest of the day was saying goodbye to family, without actually saying it. She spent time with each and every member of her family, building one last memory with them. It would be hard leaving, but to be truly happy with Silverleaf, she was given no choice.

That night she got the Orichalcum, her silver mirror, and a knife to draw blood. She also took a few items that would remind her of her family, and the reason for her leaving. Putting it all in a backpack, she moved toward the bell tower.

Hurrying through the dark, she noticed Silverleaf moving in the hall. A large smile crossed her lips and she moved toward her love. “Hello honey.” She said, “I have missed you.”

She noticed that Silverleaf looked anxious. She sees the princess and smiles a big bright smile, “I have missed you too sweaty. I think someone saw me leave my quarters. We need to keep our eyes open.”

“It won’t matter soon anyway”

Hand in hand they walked to the top of the bell tower.

What they saw in the top of the tower, they could never have guessed. First thing was there was a large symbol marked on the floor in sand, candles lit at points along the circle. In front of each candle there stood a cloaked figure with their hood up, nothing being seen through the darkness. In the middle of the circle stood Harlequin, a bone crown upon his head, a bowl in his left hand and a knife in his right.

He sees you both walk in and motions you to the center of the circle. “Princess, please lay down here, Silverleaf lay down here.” He motioned where he wanted them to lay. “Before you lay down, I need you to strip of all your cloths, and leave all objects by the door. Unfortunately nothing buy your body will be able to go where you are headed.”

The princess and Silverleaf both looked around at the 10 people in the room. The jester spoke up again, “It is the only way princess.”

Silverleaf and the princess both looked at each other and started stripping. After getting naked, they moved all their belongings to the bags and put them by the doors. Then they went and laid down in the circles.

Harlequin asked, “Princess did you bring the items?”

“Yes they are in my bag.” One of the cloaked figures moved and took them out of the bag. He handed the items to Harlequin who put the metal in a bowl that sat between the two elves. He started chanting as he took out a knife and cut his hand. He put his blood in the bowl. There is a sizzling sound and sparks move around the circle. The pressure in the circle starts to get heavy. Each person around the circle takes the knife and starts chanting, cutting their own hands and putting their blood in the circle in front of the candle. The blood starts moving toward the middle of the circle and enters into the bowl. Each person’s blood strengthening the sparking circle and the pressure increases.

At the top of the dome of power a figure appears. He seems to be a big elf, dripping with blood. As it walks, it not only doesn’t make a sound, but also doesn’t leave any trails, the blood refusing to drip off of it. The spirit moving along the outer ring of the sphere.

Harlequin moves around the inside of the circle, chanting. Then he starts moving toward the north most figure, he pulls out the knife and stabs the person in the heart. A shimmering light flows over the princesses’ body making it where she can’t move. Someone screamed, it was Silverleaf.

Harlequin yells, “Don’t move or these people’s deaths will be for nothing. I am only doing what you requested.” Then he thrusts the blade into another one of the cloaked figures face. Shimmering light surrounds Silverleaf forcing her to stop screaming. She quickly become unable to move.

Harlequin got this dark look across his face as he continues to chant and stab the people in hooded robes. Each and every one of them never made sound. With each blow of the knife, the spirit grew bigger and bigger, the blood flowing slowed and a skin started to form. The jester moved back to the center of the circle, continuing to chant, now much quieter as he is the only one left. He took out the silver mirror, dipped it in the bowl and blood that was continuing to flow into the bowl then into the spirit.

He looked at the mirror, continuing to chant, and a strange thing happened. The mirror shifted to a portal. On the other side was a large building like nothing any of them had ever seen.

Harlequin spoke, "Princess, you and Silverleaf have given your blood for this portal. My circle have given their lives. He took the knife back in his hand, I have one more thing I must give, but before I do I have to tell you, this place is a long way off from here. It will be different beyond anything you could imagine, but here you and Silverleaf would be accepted for your relationship."

Unable to move both Silverleaf and the princess looked at the portal.

"Do not let go of Siphleonix, he is the spirit who will bring you there. Remember his name, for you may have to banish him from your presence after he gets you there. Just speak his name three times and he will have to flee your presence. If he ever returns, you must do the same thing again. He is a powerful spirit to get you both through this portal, more powerful than any I have ever summoned. He will become free at the end of this, so be warned. Know his name and get protection from him when you can. He will always try and find you after this."

Then Harlequin took the knife and put it up to his forehead, "And for the final sacrifice, I give my sanity." Then he plunged the knife partway into his head. He looks at both young elves and then to the massive spirit, "Take them and be free."

The spirit grabs both immobile girls and jumps through the portal. As soon as they are gone, the portal blinks out of existence, the jester casts one more spell and the room becomes a mess. Then he passes out in the middle of what looks like an attack on the king's power circle. There was only one survivor.

In the streets of downtown Portland in the Tir Tangier, two naked women appeared on the 15. It was the middle of the night, raining, and foggy. The lights of the passing car almost didn't see the women. The car was a police officer on his way home from a long night. Officer McGlinns is a large troll who has been working the streets of Tir Tangier for years. He was one of the first non-elves to 'earn' his citizenship.

McGlinns sees a spirit appear in front of the women and start moving toward them. It was moving like a hunter about to pounce on its prey. It looked hungry for these women. One of the women screamed a word three times and the spirit fled the scene.

He pulled over and ran to the women. He realized that they were elves and very beautiful ones at that. "Ladies, are you ok?" he asked in English. They both just stared at him blankly, shivering in the rain.

He pulled out a blanked from his squad car and handed it to the women. Then in Sperediel he asked again. They both answered in a dialect he hadn't heard before. It was hard to understand. All he could understand was that they were ok and that they were married?

He had them get into the squad car and brought them into the station so they could be kept safe from the problems that obviously held them. They needed to be looked over by the doctor, and they needed to let him know what happened. It was going to be a long night.

He brought them to a holding room with a couch, had food brought to them along with clothing. Their finger prints were taken, blood samples, pictures, and scanned for any RFID tags. These women were not in the system.

He was working on his pocket secretary, the dark haired elf just kept staring at it as if it was a spell. The shimmering light from the device keeping her eyes sparkling long after she was obviously exhausted. He

better get started on his report so he can go home and get some sleep, these women would get Tir Sins in the morning and processed as Tir citizens. It was just a matter of time, the elves tend to protect their own.

He pulled up the form he would need on his data pad.

Line 1: date. October 21, 2054...