

SPENCER STONER

GIRL TALK

AN OPHELIA LEGACY STORY

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GIRL TALK

by Spencer Stoner

“You have to love the male ego.”

Ophelia chuckled as she counted the gold coins that spilled out of the pouch in one hand and into the palm of the other.

The mercenary named Ophelia sat at a small square table in the middle of

the the now, save for herself and the other woman sitting across the table, vacant tavern. Her auburn hair was pulled back, tied into a ponytail with the two long braids that grew from her temples on either side of her face.

The long red coat Ophelia usually wore when working was draped over the chair alongside the table to her right. The rest of her wardrobe, though, wasn't

what she would usually wear into battle.

She wore a skirt that was little more than a tan piece of cloth tied together against her hip. It was likely that it was a simple sheet or drape before taking up its new job as attire.

The white cotton top she wore was buttoned up to just halfway to make sure to expose as much cleavage as possible.

The back of the blouse was also mostly

cut away and replaced with a sparse system of laces to expose Ophelia's back.

That was because of the violet runes tattooed there. From between Ophelia's shoulder blades down to the small of her back, they were laid out in a rough diamond shaped pattern. They were sensitive and cloth made them itch.

“Indeed.” The other woman sitting

at the table, Lyan Yo Bunpy, responded.

“Some of them were half my size and they still thought they could defeat me.”

At just about six feet tall Ophelia wasn't at all diminutive but Lyan easily outmatched her. The Bunny Barbarian was so muscular, in fact, that she was larger than most men they encountered, let alone other women.

Unlike Ophelia, who wasn't

dressed as usual, Lyan looked the same as she always did. Pastel blue fur wrapped around her broad chest to cover her ample bosom with leather straps over her shoulders and a rabbit shaped metal clasp holding two more strips of leather across her chest. Her furry blue shorts had the cotton tail of the massive saber toothed rabbit Lyan slayed to create the armor and the thigh

high boots were formerly the front legs and fore paws of the beast.

Her black hair was tied up into two massive braids that draped over her broad, brown skinned shoulders. The left braid blended into the skin of Lyan's muscular left arm that had been permanently scorched black from the shoulder down in the battle that ended with the barbarian taking the beast's

skin.

“Chauvinism doesn't let little things like facts get in the way of a guy proving a point.” Ophelia smirked at her friend. “But some of them were pretty cute, weren't they?”

Lyan's eyebrows pressed together.

“Cute? I beat every one of them.”

“That doesn't have anything to do with a guy's looks.” Ophelia leaned back

in her chair.

“It does for me.” Lyan said.

Ophelia scowled back at the barbarian. “Even that bald one that was even bigger than you? You know, he gave me the key to his room to give to you.” She pulled the mentioned bauble out of the coat draped over the adjacent chair.

Lyan shook her head. “It doesn't

matter.”

Ophelia cocked an eyebrow back at the barbarian. “What if I told you that the only reason he lost was because of me?”

The other woman had started taking a long drag of ale from the pewter mug when the question was asked. Her first answer was to gag on the liquid.

Slamming the mug back onto the

table, Lyan wiped at the foam that went errant around her mouth. “How could you say that? You were not even involved in the contest!”

Again Ophelia grinned, tucking the pouch now refilled with their winnings into the same pocket of the long coat from which the key emerged. “I wasn't? Remember when I leaned in close to him and whispered in his ear?”

Lyan nodded. “I figured you were telling him to give up. That he couldn't beat me.”

The auburn haired woman stifled a laugh. “No. I didn't say anything like that.”

After Ophelia didn't elaborate further, the heavily muscled woman rapped on the table with her knuckles. “What did you say then?”

The mercenary was about to take a sip of her own drink but thought better of it and put her mug down before she answered. “I told him that if he let you win you might just let him see your birthmark.”

Lyan looked confused. “But I do not have a birthmark.”

Ophelia didn't say anything in agreement.

And the barbarian noticed. “Why would that have made him lose, anyway?” She asked.

Now Ophelia looked confused. “Really? I mean, have you seen yourself? You have a firm body and enormous breasts.”

Lyan shrugged her broad shoulders, the leather straps making a soft slapping noise against her chest as

she did. “I know that. But these have little to do with arm wrestling.”

“And not everyone concentrates on just one thing all the time like you. I just... made him split his focus.” The other woman answered.

“You still have not explained what my chest has to do with it.” Lyan said.

“You can't be this dense.” Ophelia rested her palm against her forehead.

“You *have* noticed that guys stare at you as you pass, right?”

The Bunny Barbarian nodded. “It is unusual to see a woman of my size walking around. It is natural to stare.”

The mercenary noticed Lyan didn't mention anything about wearing pastel blue fur with a rabbit theme drawing attention. But, even then, that wasn't the point that Ophelia was trying to make.

“Men stare at me, too. I'm tall, but not unusually so, but they stare anyway. Why?”

Lyan looked as if she'd been asked some kind of riddle. Her brown eyes locked onto Ophelia as if she was trying to find some clue.

Then the Bunny Barbarian sighed and, sure that the answer she was about to give was wrong, she said, “You are an

attractive woman.”

Ophelia nodded. “Thanks, the guys whose eyes make it to my face seem to think so, too. What about the ones who don't look at my face?”

“Don't look at your face?” Lyan muttered then came to a realization. “They keep looking at your chest. There is rarely much covering it.”

The barbarian pointed just where

she mentioned. She looked proud of herself that she had figured out the answer to which the mercenary was trying to guide her.

Ophelia pointed right back at Lyan's chest. “Your top is covering even less and those are even bigger than mine.”

The Bunny Barbarian's face slowly turned insulted. Not at Ophelia,

at least not directly, but at the memory of all the men who failed to make eye contact with her. She had taken it as a compliment previously, assuming they were simply in awe of a warrior of her reputation (word of the battle prowess of her tribe had spread wide, thanks in no small measure to her efforts over the years). Now, realizing that they only saw her as a piece of meat...

“Don't take it personally, Lyan.”

Ophelia responded to everything the heavily muscled woman was feeling.

“All anyone can see right off is our looks. Let them look. Most of the time it's just like they're looking at a painting. They appreciate the view but they aren't going to touch anything.” The mercenary leaned back in her seat as she continued.

“Best case, people will treat you better

because of your looks. Worst case, they may try to take something like sex or our lives.”

Lyan's thick arms folded across her wide chest. “So why accept it if it can lead to harm?”

“You did hear me mention that people treat us better, too, didn't you?”

Ophelia scowled back at the barbarian.

“That happens way, way more often.”

“At the risk of violence if we don't return the favor?” The muscular woman looked genuinely enraged at the idea.

The mercenary chewed on the inside of her cheek for a long moment.

“It's the same danger as carrying around that pouch full of coins. But I'm still going to. I'm not going to let something that may happen change what I want to do.”

“I do not, either.” The other woman straightened up in her seat proudly. “Still, I do not seek out the saber toothed rabbits of my land needlessly. Their ferocity in the face of possible food is an instinct that they seem unable to control.”

Ophelia nodded. “What I'm talking about is an even more base instinct. This is how every species keeps going.

Favor is shown to those you want to mate with because they appear to have traits favorable to the survival of the species. As people, though, we've gained a measure of control over ourselves and don't jump on others on a whim. With the exception of a small percentage of--” The word used described a certain anatomical part that wasn't meant literally but it got the idea

of unfavorable, unpleasant types of people across.

“You sound like the men I just crushed tonight.” Lyan rested her elbows on the table.

Ophelia shrugged back. “Hey, I still pick and choose who I'm going to be with. Not everyone makes the cut. Of one of the rejects try to force me into something...” She pantomimed a punch

and an imagined target falling to the ground with a quiet whistle.

Both of them were quiet for a long moment. The Bunny Barbarian drained the remaining liquid from her mug and placed it back on the table.

“With me willing and available as back up.” Lyan said matter-of-factly. “So what is the point of this conversation again?”

“I was just trying to say that it takes more than muscle to win.” Ophelia answered.

“And you provided this 'more'?”

The auburn haired woman nodded.

“A couple times. Although that bald guy, what was his name, Orison? He was the only one that really worried me.”

The barbarian's eyes narrowed. “I don't believe you.”

“So you're saying you want proof?”

Lyan nodded, her face as hard as stone. Ophelia felt her lips stretch into a wide smirk before emptying the contents of her own mug.

“Okay. You're sure you can beat me arm wrestling, right?” The mercenary said. “Even though I can swing a bastard sword around like a rapier in one

hand?”

“I suspect you get some help from the enchantment within.” Lyan's answer showed her somewhat haughty agreement.

Ophelia rested her elbow on the table in position to ready herself for the coming contest. “Tell you what, if I win you take the key and go up to Orison's room. If you win...”

“What do you expect me to do if I go to this Orison's room?” The barbarian interrupted.

The other woman shrugged. “I don't know. Whatever you want, really. Wrestle, ask him trivia questions, talk until dawn, knit him a sweater. It's up to you.”

Lyan let out a quiet grunt, looking thoughtful. “And if I win?”

Again, Ophelia shrugged. “What do you want?”

Lyan chewed on her thoughts for a moment before speaking. “Harbenigyr has asked me to scout out a location to the west he called Nauterhaus and I do not wish to go out all that way. If I win, you will go there for me.”

“Okay. Shall we go then?”

Ophelia smirked, wiggling her fingers

playfully.

The barbarian glanced down at the other woman's arm ready on the table.

“That is your left hand.”

“I'm a lefty, remember?” The mercenary grinned back. “Is that going to be a problem?”

Lyan flexed her scorched arm. It was scarred and black, unlike the brown tone of the rest of her skin, but the

muscles were just as large as her dominant right arm. That meant that it was still bigger than Ophelia's dominant arm.

She wrapped her hand around Ophelia's and readied for the contest. The barbarian's chocolate colored eyes stared into the pale blues of the mercenary.

“When should we start?” Ophelia

smirked.

“On the count of three?” Lyan's eyes narrowed.

“One... two...” They said together.

Neither got around to saying “three”. The arm wrestling match had already begun. Both women pushed to drive the other woman's wrist to the surface of the table for the win.

Lyan was surprised at how much

resistance the other woman gave her.

Ophelia was stronger than she looked.

Still, it wouldn't be enough...

The strain of the match up started to show on the mercenary's face. Her breath started to catch in her throat as the effort of trying to keep her arm up strained her elbow and shoulder.

“What's the matter?” Lyan's words came out of her mouth tersely. “Too

much muscle for you?”

Judging from the sound of the barbarian's voice, Ophelia definitely wasn't making it easy for Lyan. That pleased the mercenary... a little.

Ophelia's arm was starting to shake but it was holding. That wouldn't last long. The second her arm gave out Lyan would smash it into the table and, even worse, the barbarian would think she was right.

Ophelia couldn't have that and she felt herself grin when an idea popped into her head. The mercenary lifted herself until she was just barely touching the edge of her seat and leaned across the table. She lost leverage but was just able to keep her wrist from touching the wood of the table.

Her face only an inch from Lyan's, Ophelia pressed her lips to the other

woman's. The barbarian stiffened in shock and the mercenary took the opportunity. With a quick wrench of Ophelia's arm, Lyan's furry bracer thumped against the surface of the table and that, officially, marked the barbarian's defeat.

Lyan sat in stunned silence for a long, long moment. Her mouth moved several times before words actually

started coming out.

“You cheated.” She muttered.

Ophelia shook her head. “My arm never left the table. I never left my chair. The rest, well, it's not written out that it couldn't be done.”

There weren't many rules to the game but the other woman was right.

Lyan slumped back in her chair when she realized that Ophelia had won. Still, her

brown eyes dug into the mercenary.

“Was the tongue really necessary?” Lyan had to ask.

“Got your attention, didn't it?”

Ophelia laughed.

The barbarian sighed and nodded in agreement. “It did.”

“It takes more than just muscle to win.” The mercenary declared, sliding the key across the table until it rested

right in front of the heavily muscled woman. “And it's time for you to pay up.”

Lyan's eyes went from the key back up to the other woman. “Why is this so important to you, Ophelia?”

The auburn haired woman leaned back in her chair, resting her hands behind her head. “Important is the wrong word. I think that “fun” would be more

accurate.”

Lyan's head tilted to show her confusion. “I do not understand.”

“Orison seemed like a nice guy. I think you'd have fun doing, well, something with him. Though I doubt that he's the type to try and pressure you into anything.” Ophelia explained. “Even showing him your birthmark.”

“I do not have a birthmark!” The

Bunny Barbarian protested.

“Not where you can see.” Ophelia smirked. “Maybe you can have him describe it to you.”

Lyan let out a quiet growl, though her anger didn't boil too high. She lifted the brass key from the table and lifted herself to her feet.

As she turned and started for the stairs to the upper floor, Ophelia spoke

up again. “If you don't mind me asking, do you have any idea what you're going to do when you get up there?”

The Bunny Barbarian looked back over her broad shoulder at the other woman. “I believe he deserves a rematch. If he is as mighty as you think... we will have to see what happens next.”

END OF GIRL TALK