

INT. KITCHEN - MIDDAY

MUFFLED CONVERSATION CAN BE HEARD ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE KITCHEN DOOR.

MOLLY

(finishing her story)

--and now I've lost half my best clients, because
they're all scared they're gonna be the next ones.

MINNIE

Are you saying you never wanted to?

MOLLY

No! I wanted him to stop, but killing him's a bit
much.

MONA

I would have done worse to him over my babies--or
Christa's.

MOLLY

I know, but you know it's not the same.

KITCHEN DOOR OPENS. THERE IS THE SOUND OF
SOMETHING COOKING IN HOT OIL AND SOMETHING
BEING GROUND BY A MORTAR AND PESTLE OR
SOMETHING SIMILAR

MONA

Love, have you brought the--oh. Well, there you are,
Maeve, we were getting worried about you.

SOUND OF HEAVY BAGS BEING SET ON THE FLOOR, AND
A SMALLER ONE BEING SET ON A TABLE

MAEVE

Christa sends flour and I've brought more sugar and
anise.

MINNIE

Just in time, we were running out.

MONA

So we're all here then.

MAEVE

Except Mimi.

MOLLY

Except Mimi.

MINNIE

Aye, quite the journey for Mimi. No wonder she hardly
ever makes it. Anyone heard from her?

MAEVE

I've a letter out to her but I haven't heard back yet.
(*a little anxious but wants to change the subject*)
I'm sure I will soon.

MOLLY

Only fifty more fried spice cakes and we can feed all
of Armstrungard!

MONA

At least we're only bringing fried cakes to the bonfire
and not meat--you remember what that was like.

MINNIE

Och I do. Does the inn still do anything for the
holiday?

MAEVE

Aye, all three days, when I can find somebody to look
after things.

MONA

Even the Last Day?

MINNIE

Aye, plenty of folks find a warm hearth and some mulled
wine helps with their pious reflections.

MONA

Can't pretend I don't relate to that.

MOLLY

Ach. Rather slam my hand with Minnie's hammer than
reflect piously all day. The scripture only says to do
whatever makes you feel close to Galadon. It's the
monks that took it to mean setting there all day quiet
as the grave.

MONA

Well ma and pa used to keep the Last Day quiet, back
when they ran it, that's all I know.

MAEVE

Indeed they give, so that's the instruction I give.
Whether folks follow it, I can't rightly say. I'm back
here every year.

MOLLY

And it sure took you long enough to get here, Galadon's
mercy.

MAEVE

I know. It's been...

MOLLY

(suddenly sympathetic)
Oh. Right.

MINNIE

We were all sorry to hear it.

MONA

Bryce was a good man.

MAEVE

Aye, he was.

MONA

(rehashing an old argument)
Even if he never was willing to--

MINNIE

(appalled)
--Mona!

MONA

I'm not wrong, though! All these years and not once does the man--

MAEVE

--For the last time, Mona - I know you're trying to look out for your big sister. But be a dear and mind your fecking business, will you?

A somewhat awkward pause.

MINNIE

All this fuss over a wee ceremony. My Fredrick never proposed to me and it's been a good decade or more!

MONA

("tsk, tsk")
And you don't have any babes between you.

MINNIE

What would we do with wee ones? Freddy's a traveling merchant and I'm an armorer--neither are good lives to bring babies up to. Besides, you and Christa have plenty enough children for all of us between you. You'll be grandmothers any day now. Leave off.

MONA

I'm just saying it'd be decent if Freddy made an honest woman of you, too.

MAEVE
He'd sooner make an honest
woman of Molly.

MOLLY
He'd sooner make an honest
woman of me.

BEAT.

ALL FOUR SISTERS BURST OUT LAUGHING.

MAEVE SHUFFLES ACROSS THE ROOM.

MAEVE
Let me through.

MONA
I am frying things here, you go the other way!

MAEVE
Molly, let me get my hands washed.

MOLLY
I'm moving, I'm moving.

SHUFFLING AND UNCOMFORTABLE NOISES

MAEVE
Minnie, when are you gonna get a proper kitchen, I
swear!

MINNIE
When are you gonna finish telling me about those
girls--was one of them really Lady Redmoor?

SOUNDS OF HANDWASHING

MOLLY
Lady Mooncrest, I heard she got married.

MAEVE
That's what I heard too.

MINNIE
Well, tell me about her and we can worry about my
kitchen later.

MOLLY
Your forge, you mean.

MONA
Hush, I haven't heard anything about Lady Redmoor or
Mooncrest or whoever she is being at Maeve's little
inn!

MAEVE

(correcting her)
Our little inn.

MONA

(ignoring the correction)
At the inn. Me and Christa are way out nowhere and you know how long it takes any letters to get out there, so go ahead and tell us, Maeve.

MAEVE

Well, she sure wasn't no serving girl, I'll tell you that much. And she picked herself up a baby, too.

MOLLY

What's a lady like her know what to do with a baby?

MAEVE

Not a thing! Little critter cried and cried like Denny when he was little and the girls left him behind.

MONA

Poor thing musta been missing his mama! Where was she?

MINNIE

Probably an orphan from the battle. Plenty people got out, but just as many didn't. Been doing good business on cheap knives and swords lately, if I do say so myself. Folks looking for protection for themselves and their babes.

MOLLY

I woulda just taken him to an orphanage. There's been lots of Elves around them after the battle and they probably woulda found his mama right quick.

MAEVE, MINNIE, AND MONA GET QUIET WHEN
MOLLY MENTIONS THE ELVES, THOUGH SHE
DOESN'T SEEM TO NOTICE AND CHATTERS ON.

MOLLY

And even if they didn't, there's lots what can be done for the wee ones when they get to the orphanages, you know. It's better than taking care of some baby who's not yours and not even proper family, I think.

MINNIE

"Proper" family's whatever you make of it. I think we can all agree about that.

MONA

You're not wrong. Are there anymore spice cakes shaped for frying?

MOLLY

Minnie, I need more--

MINNIE

--I'm all out until we've got more anise and nutmeg ground.

MAEVE

I'll help. Molly, you wanna go help Christa and the kids pick up some powders for the candles while we get these spices ground? No sense making you wait around for us.

MOLLY

You don't mind? I could help if you really need me to.

MAEVE

No, no, you go on ahead. Two of us is too much already--there's no space in here as is.

MONA

Aye, and somebody has to get powders for the four of us for our candles.

MINNIE

I want my candles turning green.

MOLLY

You'll get what they've got--you know they only started even having them around this time on account of us Baileys always asking for them for the holiday.

MAEVE

Get me red, if you can.

MONA

Purple for my candles.

MOLLY

Sure, sure. Well, then, I'll be back in an hour or so, help with making the cakes.

SOUNDS OF HANDWASHING AND MOVING AROUND.
KITCHEN DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS.

MAEVE

I don't think it woulda been a good idea for those girls to take that baby to an orphanage. You know the Lord Commander stopped by our little inn? Was real interested in that baby. Didn't much seem to care about the lady taking care of it.

MINNIE

Elves are like that, more often than not. You ever notice that? Real interested in whatever you can do for them, but not so much in you.

MONA

I can't say I see much of Elves out where I'm at. Probably for the best, since I don't think the people who come by my are much fond of them. Especially lately. There's been lots of travel back and forth. Lots of real private people, you know?

MINNIE

Wearing big hoods? Keeping their faces covered?

MONA

(agreeing)
Mmm-hmm.

MAEVE

Now, you two wouldn't happen to be keeping something from your big sister, now would you?

MINNIE

(lowering her voice)
You can't be telling Molly this, right? She's a little..comfortable with authority, you know?

MAEVE

(also lowering her voice)
Like Elves.

MONA

Them, too.

MINNIE

Like I said. Been doing real good business on cheap knives and swords. Mostly in barter. Mostly women, mothers with babes littler than you would believe. I only got a look under the hood of one of 'em. One of the first ones. Her eyes were...well, something else. Kinda eyes you don't see much of in the east, especially Armstrungard. Noticeable.

MAEVE

I hear you.

MINNIE

(back to normal volume)

But coin is coin and trade is trade, so I just did my business with her and I guess she told some other folks who might have need for a weapon.

MONA

Coin is coin and trade is trade. If somebody wants to do their shopping with their hood up, it ain't no business of ours.

MINNIE

Right.

MAEVE

That sure is true. I...didn't know. Didn't even know to think about it. But why didn't either of you mention any of this in your letters?

MINNIE

I didn't want to say anything that way. You know letters don't always get where they're going.

MONA

And I didn't know how much of what I was hearing all the way out in the west was accurate or timely.

MAEVE

I hear you. I think...I think something might be going on. More than just this whole war. Bigger.

MONA

If the Elves are involved, then those real private people? I think they must be smack in the middle of it. For the Elves to be so strong and them so weak and the Elves still hating them like that.

MAEVE

I think you're right. I have a friend I'm gonna talk to, let him know what you girls have told me. Can you keep your eyes open and your ears to the ground?

MONA

Sure thing.

MINNIE

Always do.

MAEVE

I'll ask Molly, too, but...maybe I just won't tell her about your very private clients. Like you said, she's real comfortable with authority in ways that'll get

(MORE)

MAEVE (cont'd)
back to the Elves. And they don't need to know every
single little thing, right?

MONA
Right.

MINNIE
Right.

MAEVE
So then we're all--

--There's a loud CLATTER from outside the
kitchen.

Mona hurries over and throws open the door.

MONA
Brayden? Let me see what you have!

BRAYDEN (A YOUNG CHILD)
A battleaxe!

MONA
No!

END OF MINISODE.