

On the first clear day of spring, Moekin rounded the bend in the forest. The sight that greeted him was one that he had been looking forward to for a long time. It had been two years since he had laid eyes on the village of his friends the Tanners. The Halfling village was nestled in a dense part of the forest that was just out side of his hometown of Briarwood.

Approaching the village Moekin noticed that it had grown in the past two years. The small Village Square boasted a new wooden house for the healer, instead of the thatched huts that make up the rest of the homes. The house of the Tanners had not changed though. It still was a squat thatched hut with a small wooden door. That still squeaked, as Meranda came out of the house with a bucket in hand.

As she turned to go to the well she saw a human coming down the main path. As this human came closer she dropped her bucket and started to run towards him. “Milo, Gabe, come quick. Moekin has returned.” She shouted. The two old friends embraced as two Halflings came bursting out the door. The first one out was the shorter of the two. The second one quickly over took the smaller one and came to a crashing halt as he ran into Moekin. “Milo, how have you been? I do believe that you have grown a little since I saw you last.”

“I have, and I’ve also been practicing the hunting skills that you showed me. I’ve gotten really good at them also; I actually downed a doe just the other day. I might even be able to keep up with you now.”

“We shall see about that little one” Moekin stated as he swept the feet out from underneath Milo. Milo came crashing down to the ground with a thud as his little brother Gabe came running up to Moekin and wrapped his arms around Moekin’s legs.

“Now who is this strapping young man, I don’t think that I have had the pleasure of meeting you young sir.” Moekin said as he gave a wink to Meranda.

“Sure you have Moekin, it is me Gabe, and I’m all grown up now.”

“Well I’ll be it sure is, you have grown, but not up” Moekin said with a laugh.

“But I have, I am only four inches shorter than Milo”

“But still you only come to just above my knee.”

The door to the house burst open and a stout Halfling with barreled chest came stomping out. “Well you have a lot of nerve showing up here human. What are you doing embracing my wife, human.”

“I don’t think that is any of your business halfling” Moekin stated as he marched towards the Halfling. They squared off and stared at each other for a few moments then they both broke out in gruff laughter and embraced each other. The Halfling was no other than Kestel Tanner, long time friend and fellow adventure of Moekin.

“Kestel, old man how has the world been treating you this past two years.”

“I’m not under ground yet, so it must be fine.”

"It would take an army to bring you down, and even then you would take most of them with you." Moekin said with laughter in his voice.

"You've got that damn right, and with the luck of the gods you would be by my side and we would be victorious."

"That's the way that it worked out many times before."

"Have you eaten yet?" Meranda asked as she approached the two friends.

"As a matter of fact, I was hoping that you would ask me that. I have been looking forward to your cooking for two years."

"We have some meat left over from Milo's kill, come on in and have a seat. We've plenty to catch up on." Kestel said as he turned and started to walk back to the house.

"Wait for us." Shouted Gabe

Moekin turned just in time to see Milo staring at a young Halfling female as he was walking back to the house and not watching where he was going, Milo tripped and fell flat on his face. The young girl started to giggle and ran off down the street.

"Milo's got a girlfriend." Gabe said as he skipped by laughing at his brother.

Milo jumped up and took a swing at his brother, "Do not!"

"Boys that is quite enough. Come on your parents are already in the house, come on let's go."

Milo, Gabe and Moekin walked through the door.

* * * *

"Would you like seconds?" Meranda asked Moekin used a biscuit to sop up the last of the gravy on his plate.

"No thanks, I am stuffed to the hilt. Your cooking always hits the spot."

"Dad, tell us again how you single handedly killed that Ancient Red Dragon that was gonna eat Moekin." Gabe asked as Meranda cleaned the table.

"So it was ancient, I thought it was a hatchling, and I seem to remember that there were three of us there" Moekin said with a chuckle.

"Well, uh..."

“Never mind about that, we were just coming to the good part”

“There we were in a clearing on the mountain just past Devil’s Peak. When we spotted that damned white hared bastard Dark Elf.” Kestel continued on.

“Now be careful what you say around the children Kestel.” Moekin said.

“Sorry, Moekin, I just get so angry about the fact that he got away.”

“It was not your fault, my old friend. He was just a sneaky fiend, the way that he led us into that trap with that dragon.”

“I know, given the chance we would have had him and his head on a pike to bring back to that poor village that he raided.”

“Never the less, the Dragon was slain, the Dark Elf did get away. But we rescued the captives and returned them to the village. With that said its way past our bedtime. Milo you need to get up early if you want to go hunting with Moekin.”

“Can I go to?” Gabe Whined.

“No, you are too small.” Snorted Milo

“Am not”

“Some day you will be big enough to go.” Moekin stated to Gabe with a wink.
