

Suzu: Snared and Silked

by Kolik

I

The wilds of Exoda concealed many alluring treasures and equally many monsters – in fact, it was so hard to find one without the other that to talk about either practically meant both. That was why Suzu had been skeptical of the bartender who'd told her about easy treasure; it was never easy.

"So, how many?" the roguish mouse had asked him across the quiet end of the bar.

He'd looked away, furrowing his heavy ursine brow. "How many what?"

Suzu was only about five and a half feet tall, but she didn't blanch at the notion of interrogating a heavysset bear who had at least a foot on her. "How many people have you told about this already?" This time he didn't bother answering, which meant there had been a lot, who either hadn't returned or had only managed it thanks to some good old fashioned Exodan resurrection magic. There was almost certainly something that ate adventurers lurking around this treasure, which the bartender didn't want to mention. Bad luck to talk about it during business hours, Suzu guessed.

"Look, d'you want the map or not? The goods are practically sitting out the open." Turns out she had. She always needed money.

But now, having followed the map to her destination, and standing in front of the dark opening in the earth that defied any sunlight, Suzu wondered if perhaps she ought to have pressed him a bit harder. She glanced up at the ancient structure behind the hole, a cubic building seventy feet across that might have been stone – it was hard to tell with the deep layers of moss and clinging vines that had grown across it at every angle over the years.

Suzu was an agile climber, but the forest she stood in was a *rainforest*. The moss was perpetually slick with a thin film of water, and the vines were incapable of supporting her weight – a fact she had discovered the hard way with a heavy fall. Getting to her feet, Suzu had found the hole: a way forward, sure, but not a good one. Shifting her weight onto one foot, she felt the tight but comforting material of her pants move with her like a second skin. "Fine. We'll do it the dirty way," she said with a shrug.

The rogue was no stranger to creeping around in the dark, and to her surprise this ranked as a pretty nice tunnel. Once her eyes adjusted to the dimness, she found only one way to go forward with just a few cobwebs hanging down from the ceiling to tickle her ears every few feet. She padded on silently, her long muscular tail and blue cape dragging behind her, until she came to another problem.

"Seriously?" A wall of sandy bricks blocked the tunnel, though at this angle it was closer to a floor. The stone was painted with bright red warnings in a script she couldn't read. For the second time that afternoon, the plump mouse woman thought about what kind of treasure guardian would inspire *this* kind of caution and if she was really reckless enough to press on. She decided to take a closer look at the flecking pigment, leaning forward on one hand.

Suzu was, to put it politely, top heavy.

Her breasts, dangling beneath her as she leaned forward, were so large she wore two black belt straps wrapped across them in an X. Even when she stood up straight, her bust reached out well past her chipper buck teeth and filled her shirt so fully it left her belly exposed. She wore sleek form-fitting black gloves that ran up past her elbows, with many of her fingers sporting jewelled rings with enchantments woven across them. The exception was the ruby on one pinky, which she wore just for the way it caught the light.

Below her prodigious bust, Suzu had the curvy hips and trim waist of a professional rogue wrapped up in form-fitting pants and thigh-high leather boots. The boots were custom molded to the shape of her legs, letting her mousy toes wiggle and flex – and they had high heels, too. Because she knew she looked good in heels.

Suzu's tail was unique among rodents, a thick rope of muscle that sprouted from the top of her toned butt and trailed six feet behind her. Prehensile, dexterous, and always flicking, her tail could lift great armfuls of treasure or suspend her entire body while she crept across rafters and rooftops. Enigmatically, she had fitted a rather plain-looking golden crown snugly near the base, wearing it like an oversized ring.

Whoever had put the bricks there hadn't anticipated a woman of Suzu's heft ever leaning on it, and they gave way in a deafening shower of mortar and dust. "Whoa!" Her tail shot out on reflex, twisting around a thick tree root like a grappling hook and jerking her to a stop. She dangled upside down while loosed earth and stones shot by. Beneath her the booming impact of each brick echoed around some large, unseen space – it would not be a good fall to make upside down, even with her natural agility. Her mind whirled with possible escape options but she was interrupted by a creaking snap from above as the root's skin began to tear off in her powerful grip.

Suzu slid down, hung for one tantalizing second, then plummeted into darkness as the root gave way.

II

"Not today." Suzu flipped backwards in midair, flinging her tail down into a coiled spring that cushioned her landing, then bounced to the side and came to rest in a deep crouch a safe distance from the pile of debris. She drew her cloak around herself. "Guess that decision made itself," she muttered with a roll of her eyes.

Suzu had fallen about thirty feet into a large cubic space – the interior of what she had climbed around outside, extending underground. The interior was a stark contrast to the rainforest, trading misty clouds for puffs of dust kicked up by both the falling rocks and Suzu herself. The place was so dry and arid there was loose sand scattered across the floor in every direction as far as she could see, pooling in small banks a couple inches high. Perhaps some kind of magitech had sealed the interior off from the outside, preserving its desert biome for reasons lost to time.

The room was held up by a forest of stark square pillars five or six feet on each side, whose tops vanished among the murky heights. They were clustered close together around the perimeter of the room and thinned out near the center. A wider, stubby block sat alone in the middle with something atop it – and *that* was too far away to make out. Suzu deftly brought her ring of farsight up to one eye, and a flickering magitech window an inch wide materialized just above the gem. Looking through it was like using a telescope, and Suzu could see a beam of light that pierced down from the ceiling directly above the block before being scattered into harsh bright slivers that stuck out against the gloom.

Flicking the ring off, Suzu allowed herself a smile. She had learned to gauge treasure by the light it cast, and in her experience that kind of cascading pattern meant a big fat jewel. She *liked* jewels. This one might be so big she'd have to lug it around coiled in her tail – a good problem to have when you wanted a market trader's jaw to drop. She could see the beam of light carried the distinct yellow tint of the afternoon sun she had felt only minutes ago. It must have been coming from a hole in the ceiling,

which explained how the other adventurers had entered this place and how she would probably have to leave.

But first things first. Suzu padded forward quietly, trailing her cloak inches above the ground and putting distance between herself and her noisy entry point – whatever lived here was surely woken up and she didn't want to come face to face with it. Flitting from the cover of one pillar to the next, the mouse woman came as close as she could to the middle. It was very bright here, and the corona of glittering light the treasure was throwing off made it impossible to see up into the void above; she would have no cover until she got the thing and retreated back to the darkness. A lesser thief might not even have been able to make the twelve-foot jump up the sheer side of the block, but Suzu was endowed enough not to care. She darted forward, bunched her thick legs beneath her – and stopped.

There were white lines on the stone crisscrossing near the lip, but something about the way they were arranged had twigged her instincts. The roguish mouse remained motionless, staring up at the block and trying to piece together why they bothered her so much. The whispery lines were not scratches, and they couldn't be reflections at that angle. They were too intricate, too regular, too unnaturally white.

Suzu scooped up a handful of sand and tossed it above her head. The grains danced through the air and caught on something that had been all but invisible: a spiderweb. With a sinking heart, Suzu threw up another handful, then another and another until she had coated all the hidden strands nearby. From what she could see, the web extended outward from the top of the block in a typical orb weaver pattern, its telltale shine lost in the corona around the jewel. The web was mostly horizontal, with anchor strands that reached up to the nearby pillars and formed small hills out of the spiral strands. The gaps between each individual line of silk were just the wrong size for Suzu; she wouldn't be able to hop up through them with more than a couple inches of clearance. Not that she had the inclination – Suzu knew anything capable of weaving a web like this would be a tall order to escape, let alone defeat.

Feeling distinctly exposed, the mouse woman turned around and moved back towards where she had come out, glancing up and around and trying to calm the fluttering in her chest, but when she reached the edge of the shadow, one of her whiskers itched. Suzu instantly leapt back, this time dragging more than her cloak. A white strand attached to her whisker tensed, caught the light for a heartbeat, then fell to tatters. Suzu wiped her face absently, staring at the gap where the web had been hanging. She had walked there not a minute ago. The web had been weak, which meant it was fresh. That was *very bad*.

Suzu flicked her tail in an unconscious, nervous gesture only for it to catch on something soft and stretchy. She squeaked and sprang desperately towards the darkness only to be yanked to a halt in midair and flop to the ground. "Oof!"

Looking over her shoulder, Suzu felt her professional rogue's composure begin to unravel. Hanging on the side of the block was the biggest spider she had ever seen, with ink-black chitin that greedily absorbed the chamber's light and allowed only greasy squiggles to slither over every bulge and chink. Spindly but strong black legs reached wide, forming an 8-pointed star the better part of twenty feet across. A sheet of silk was attached to the end of Suzu's tail and held taught by the spider's two shortest legs, vanishing under its body to join the loathsome spinnerets sitting at the end of an abdomen that even now quivered with the effort of weaving. A white pattern stretched across that abdomen, looking like an empty-eyed skull that stared out to infinity, teeth dissolving into the black body.

The spider's own eyes were even more unsettling, eight dots arranged in a mocking crown at the top of the cephalothorax, each the color of crystallized blood and lacking anything resembling a pupil. Six of them were pointed directly at Suzu, tracking her every movement with many times the precision of any mammalian hunter. Trickles of evil-looking purple venom dripped from the spider's mouth and fangs, promising things that Suzu didn't want to think about.

"Alright, spidey, back off." Suzu planted her heels and pushed herself backwards, but the spider merely let out slack and allowed her to move away like a fish on a line. The instant she paused, the

beast drew her back in. Then its front limbs darted forward and Suzu saw another few inches of her tail disappear beneath the white shroud. Suzu tried to push away again, kicking up puffs of sand while scrabbling for purchase, but yet again the spider simply waited for Suzu to falter before giving a good yank. Suzu felt her progress away from the beast be erased while the spider simply collected its own progress up her tail with another whispery grope. Almost two feet of Suzu's tail was shrouded in silk now, and the most unnerving thing was how soft that silk was – if she had closed her eyes, Suzu wouldn't have even been able to feel it.

"I said..." Suzu muttered to herself. She pushed away a third time, drawing her tail into a straight line – but this time when the spider tugged her back, she curled her body into a cannonball. With a mighty flex of her hips and butt, Suzu pulled on her own tail, using the spider's grip against it to shoot towards the beast and snap her legs into a double-pointed heel kick that landed right between its eyes. "...Back *off!*" The tension in the silk vanished as Suzu's body mass slammed the spider into the stone, where it crumpled into a thicket of limbs that hissed and flailed with mindless pain.

Suzu was on her feet in a flash, snapping her tail free with a powerful hip twist. She ran back into the darkness and reset her cloak on her shoulders, zigzagging around corners and taking erratic paths between the columns. If the spider had been fast and silent enough to weave a web behind her in the seconds it had taken her to examine the central block, then the way she had come in was surely trapped with webs by now. That left her with two options: find a way up to the heights of the room and escape through the ceiling dozens of feet above her, or defeat the spider outright. It wasn't a great choice – Suzu wasn't helpless in a fight, but she was far from a warrior.

Swerving behind a column and coming to a stop, Suzu drew one hand across her belt and felt the small vial of magical liquid tucked there snugly. She did have *that* as a last resort if things got really grim, not to mention her own skills and her usual array of tools and magic items. Still...

The sound that interrupted her thoughts came from far above her, inaudible to anyone but a mouse like Suzu. As it was, she barely had time to act on reflex and jerk away from the column before

a purple glob of venom smacked into the stone right where she'd been standing. It missed her by inches, droplets splashing onto her face, and although Suzu shut her eyes immediately she could still feel the energy-sapping liquid begin to work its way into her fur and skin. Spitting and wiping at her snout, Suzu opened her eyes and looked up just in time for the second venom spurt to hit her full on. This time there was no escape, and Suzu could do nothing but cough and try to shield herself from further hits as she collapsed to her knees.

"Ah, gross!" The venom had a sickly sweet taste like an exotic fruit with a bitter undertone. It worked quickly, and even as the third shot made contact with her tits, Suzu felt her body grow heavier. Her limbs ignored her frantic calls to action, and the agile counterweight of her tail began to seem more like a waterlogged rope. With every bit of flagging strength she could muster, Suzu forced herself to stand and lean against the nearest column even as purple rivulets ran down its face from globs that had missed their mark. If she could just get around the corner and draw her knife...

It wasn't enough. Another glob of venom broke over Suzu's head (the fifth? or the sixth?) and the spider descended on her. Strong, thin legs ending in mean little claws began to disarm the mouse woman. First was her cloak, ripped from her shoulders and fluttering to the floor unceremoniously. Next was her knife, snatched from the sheath on her hip and tossed into impenetrable darkness even as Suzu's numb fingers tried to draw it. Suzu fought to raise her hands, to draw breath to whisper a command word for the fireblast ring on her index finger – and suddenly found her hands swathed in white. With a great yank, the spider pulled her gloves clear of her trembling arms, and with them went the rings. Suzu's naked hands were promptly slapped with two globs of webbing.

Suzu didn't have time to bemoan her digits being reduced to powerless fists: each white silken ball had a string trailing away from it to one of the spider's longer middle legs, and she was stretched up into a Y-shape against the pillar as the spider settled in. "No..." was all she could manage.

Growing bolder with each unchallenged pluck, the spider's nimble front legs grabbed at the tools on Suzu's belt, snatching and scrabbling greedily for purchase on the soft cloth. Suzu braced for pain

but the sensation was very different – almost like being tickled. The mouse woman squeaked and squealed as the spider prodded her and scattered her tools onto the ground. She tried to pry herself away but only succeeded in making her body jiggle and bounce with every motion. Her tits went one way and her waist another, straining against her tight shirt and pants, jostling whenever she reached the limits of the silk. Half-formed protests spilled from her mouth as the spider relentlessly pawed at Suzu's body with two legs and held her still with two others.

And yet, after a moment of this, Suzu realized she hadn't been totally disarmed – her secret vial was still tucked into the back of her belt, and her clothes remained mostly intact. The spider seemed to have found a different target for its attention, running its front legs across Suzu's prodigious boobs and examining them intently as they squished under the pressure. The mouse woman bit her lip and remained still as the spider explored her bust, slipping its claws into the valley of her cleavage and testing how far down it could press the cloth. Arachnid claws grasped on instinct whenever they drifted across the leather straps, tugging Suzu's chest in one direction or another and getting another squeak each time.

Suzu gulped, forcing moisture down her dry throat. "You like that? My boobs... look nice, right? Bouncy? I know a... I can dance! Let me go... I'll dance for you. I promise..." The spider gave no answer but a fondle, and just as Suzu was drawing another breath the beast hooked one leg under the X on the front of her tits and pulled – firmly. Suzu's let out a faint, wordless whine as the leather stretched, stretched, and finally snapped. Her breasts flopped outward heavily, free of everything but a shirt that only suggested containment.

The spider reached down and lifted one appraisingly. "H-hey..." Suzu tried to shout but the sudden snap had taken the wind out of her and her captor had been reinvigorated. With a playful tug, she felt her arms stretch above her head, getting a tremendous jiggle and another whine from Suzu – but that hadn't been its main goal. It reached down and began to ensnare her tail.

At full strength, Suzu would have easily been able to tail whip the spider's grasp away, but the venom had sunk into her system and she could barely move her own body. The spider brought down yet another leg and began wrapping the tip of her tail again in fresh white webbing until it was thoroughly coated, and then doing something strange: it used her own tail against her. The rogue could merely watch as her hefty, meaty tail was turned into yet another bind, circling downwards from her hips around her butt, legs, and shins before ending just above her ankles. Three layers of white, feathery silk sealed her self-made restraint as surely as nails in a coffin. Grabbing here and there, the spider arranged Suzu into a sort of standing pencil position, her hair thoroughly dishevelled and knees wobbling under her own body weight. Then it skittered back up into the dark, dragging her with it.

III

Suzu watched the sandy ground pull away from her with dismay. Her fate was almost certainly sealed at this point, but what hurt more than the dull, pulsing ache of the venom in her system was the knowledge of how thoroughly the spider had defeated her. She had been hunted down like an insect, stumbling into danger and barely putting up a fight when it counted. She often teased Sascha, her tiger dancer friend, for practically walking into the mouths of predators, but had she really fared any better? Some rogue she was.

Well, my vial is still there. But I have no idea how I'm ever gonna reach it.

With nothing else to do, Suzu watched the spider climb above her. Even with the extra weight of its prey, the beast was quick and even-footed, ascending to its home among the pillars with an inhumanly smooth crawl. Its black chitin faded into the gloom like a stone beneath water, leaving only the stark white skull pattern to leer down at Suzu. Morbid curiosity made the rogue wonder how extensive the webs in the area were. Secured in here the spider had nothing but time, and it had been as industrious as any member of its species.

There was enough light to cast glimmers on the near-invisible threads, and Suzu estimated there were layers of webbing that ran through most of the airspace in the chamber starting about a dozen feet above the floor. In some odd way, her entrance with the bricks had saved her from being caught instantly, but in her haste to move away she hadn't considered that such a well-entrenched monster might have been awaiting her.

Suzu felt another tug on the string above her, expecting to be carried somewhere, but she just swung to a stop above a strand before being lowered onto it with barely enough time to set her feet steady. It was a few inches wide and smooth to the touch, obviously for the spider to move around on rather than ensnare prey. This upper layer of webbing extended all throughout the columns, creating a white lattice about fifteen feet from the ceiling. Balancing was easy enough, even with her legs and tail

bound up in silk, but she couldn't see the point. Certainly the spider wasn't letting her go. She blinked in confusion and looked up, "Uh, what are you doing?"

Her answer came silently. The threads holding her arms tugged her along, pulling her forward on the strand and forcing Suzu to lean forward and swivel like a marionette. With each ungainly step, her tits were free to sway and bounce while her butt was perked up behind her like a fat scoop of ice cream at the top of a tall glass, filling out her pants and stray strands of white webbing. The spider's plan was grimly clear now: the mouse was food, and she was being played with.

Before long Suzu had run out of room on her strand, so she jumped unsteadily to the next one, hobbled along it, and then repeated the cycle. She kept expecting each strand to snap and leave her plummeting to the hard ground, but they were as sure as steel cable. All the better for Suzu to stagger across, because with no counterweight from her tail and no restraint on her breasts, she was having a tough time keeping her balance for the first time in years. Every shift of her not-insignificant weight was a risk, and the spider never relented.

The next jump was onto a diagonal strand, and so Suzu's footing was just a bit less stable. Her breasts swung out into empty space and she had to drop into a lascivious crouch in order to keep her center of gravity from following suit. The motion made her ass and thighs stick out even more, straining against the silk and tail that bound it, and her chest would have made her leather boob straps creak if she'd still been wearing them – but she wasn't, and so her boobs swung back into her ribs.

"Pff!" she grunted. "Are they really *that* big? Maybe Sascha was right abou—" The thread tugged again, and Suzu was pulled towards the space she'd tried to avoid. She squeaked, and with a mighty jump managed to clear the gap. Another heavy landing made her even more unstable, chest jostling so much it was practically leading the way now, and so the mouse woman kept jumping and jiggling with less and less purchase on each strand. One errant bounce took her towards the center of the room, and to her surprise the threads on her hands went slack.

Did it break? Whatever – just go!

Suzu began to bounce in the direction of the light. She was up quite high, and suddenly the opening in the ceiling didn't seem so out of reach. Escape plans began to whirl through her head. If she could get some distance, and distract the spider, and find a way to struggle out of the webbing, and reach the vial on her belt, then she might have a chance.

A callous yank caught Suzu mid-bounce, sending her tumbling down below the layer of webs she'd been standing on. She let out a shriek before the silk around her hands went taught, swinging her upwards in a big arc past the tightrope strands, twirling upwards so high she nearly touched the ceiling, then down until she landed with a heavy flop on something that knocked the wind out of her.

While she'd been hopping and jiggling along, the spider had come down from the ceiling and reclined onto its back atop a thick hammock of webbing that ran between two columns. Suzu found herself resting on the beast's belly, a surprisingly smooth surface that would give her just enough room to stand up and wobble from side to side. The spider's head was propped up almost curiously, leaning against one column like Suzu did when she was about to curl up with a good book before bed – and with a sinking feeling, the mousy rogue realized the spider now had eight limbs free to play with her. She mustered a sheepish grin as the spider's legs rose around her in a menacing octagon, abdomen and spinnerets quivering. "So... how about that dance?"

White silk clung to Suzu's body in erratic layers that left not a single limb free. The threads connecting Suzu's arms had become hopelessly tangled during her swing, mushing her silken gloves into a single white mass, so the spider simply brought one leg down and cut the strands off. She pushed herself onto her knees, mustering her wits for one more meager attempt at mercy. "S-see?" the rogue asked, doing her best to sway back and forth enticingly. All she could really do was turn her waist, but the spider's encroaching limbs paused.

Encouraged, Suzu sat up straighter and pushed her chest out. The spider's six visible eyes locked onto her, following each movement with compound precision. "I'll keep dancing! You liked it, right? You... you liked watching me bounce! I can do that!" She stood up unsteadily and tried to continue her

dance, but she shortly overbalanced to her left. Before Suzu could topple, she was tugged at by a leg on her right side. This sent her reeling rightward, only to be stopped by a pull from the left. Each limb took its turn tugging on Suzu, sending her tilting across the spider's belly each and every way, desperate to keep her footing.

"Whoa!" Then one of the tugs felt different, just a little bit more firm. Through her dizzying dance (if you could call it that), Suzu managed to look down past her chest and see the reason: her left hand had been pulled under her bust and hooked snugly in place against the right side of her ribs. One tug later, her right arm mirrored it with a fresh patch of silk. With her arms crossed like a push-up bra, Suzu felt even more like an object meant to be ogled.

And ogle the spider did, training its eyes on Suzu and drinking in every curve of her body while it continued to push her around with its legs. Each dark limb worked like a delicate sewing needle being fed silk from the spinnerets, jabbing down to attach a new strand to some soft part of the mouse woman's body and instantly retreating to gather more silk. The first new layer formed around her waist and elbows to prevent her from breaking free, getting a whine from its prey. Then the spider moved upwards, manipulating her with unkind taps that made it clear the beast's hunger was getting the better of it. This was the final chapter of their little game.

Silk crawled upwards over Suzu, steadily and implacably turning her dark clothing into a white skintight gown. The world had become a blur past her nose, so Suzu just stared down at her body and watched as the soft, supple muscle she had spent so much time toning was covered up one inch at a time, creating a little border of squished-up fat that marked where she stopped being a master thief and started being spider food. It crested her tits like a clinging evening dress, making a deep well of cleavage and helped by hands that had been forced to treachery. The rogue was reminded of the times she'd distracted or outright bribed castle guards with just a glance at her body, just a tease of those orbs which the spider would soon taste for itself.

Suzu gulped. She could feel her heart pounding in her chest. Her ears could pick up every little shifting sound the silk made, every tightening rustle that got closer and closer to her head. Finally, with her arms and boobs and neck covered in a fresh white hardening sheet that matched the silk from her waist down, Suzu's desperation got the best of her. Better to fall, better *anything* than this playful torture. She threw herself out past the spider's legs.

Or at least she tried. Swaddled as she was, Suzu was barely able to move, and as she tried to leap the spider planted a big, thick, wet strand of silk on the back of her shoulders. The mouse woman was pulled up off the spider's body by one of its longer legs, robbing her of even the attempt at a jump. She dangled facing the beast, drawing in heavy, slow breaths through the silk that covered every inch of her body below the neck. Suzu's hair was a mess, her clothes invisible beneath the deathly white, and her eyes had deep, sunken bags underneath them as the fatigue of the day caught up with her. "Please, just let... please..."

The spider lifted a silent leg, placed it on her shoulder, and gently began to spin her around. Suzu's eyes unfocused as the spider's head, legs, and abdomen all swirled around her, passing sideways through her vision at regular intervals. Her ears tickled as more silk was placed onto them, briefly loud, then more muffled and more hopeless with every layer. After a minute the tickling moved to the sides of her eyes and suddenly she couldn't see anything. The spider's legs closed in and worked delicately now, wrapping their prey in a masterwork blindfold with only the barest whisper of contact. It was a flawless sleeping mask. Suzu would only need it once.

Suzu drifted slowly to a stop with only her mouth exposed, hanging open to plead and whine. "D-don't eat me..." Blind and bound, she could do nothing but wait as the moment dragged on. And on. And then she felt a cloying, fruity taste hit her mouth.

The spider had fed her a tremendous drop of venom straight from the source and she could only gulp it down desperately to stop herself from choking. As soon as the evil purple stuff had gone down

her throat, it was followed by a ball of webbing that clogged her mouth, then a final sheet of silk wrapping around her lips and the back of her neck.

Suzu was no longer a rogue. She was a soft, feminine cocoon twitching in the spider's grasp with her brain getting scrambled by the shot of venom seeping into her guts. She barely even noticed as she was lifted further up, then lowered towards the spider's mouth like a grape. Anything resembling hope was flushed out of her body as the venom seeped deeper.

So, this is how it ends, huh?

Distantly, Suzu felt the spider's fangs caress her ankles. A wet tightness spread around her feet. It was eating her. With nothing else to do, Suzu struggled weakly. She could move her arms and pull her legs very slightly, and when she combined the two motions it almost felt like she was doing something. Her breasts, even swaddled in layers of silk, still had enough heft to sway left and right while the spider's mouth climbed up her legs. As her legs got thicker and her tail neared its base, the sheer amount of meat disappearing between the beast's fangs grew too – and when it tried to climb past her butt, it failed. Suzu's descent abruptly stopped. Just a few minutes ago she would have been elated but she was no longer delusional about her chances.

Come on, my butt's not that fat. Just get it over with.

The spider's fangs and mouth made for a scratchy tickling feeling around Suzu's ass and the base of her tail. She joined her predator now, swivelling her waist back and forth in time with its gulps, helping it to get just another fraction of an inch of purchase on her. Blindfolded as she was, Suzu could only rely on her muffled sense of touch to tell that she was slowly but surely sinking into the spider's gullet – until she dropped another half foot with a jerk, sealing her legs into an impossibly tight space.

Finally. Now just my boobs...

Suzu's boobs had always been her most prominent feature, and she'd developed a habit of playing with them that always seemed to come out at the worst of times. This was one of those times, and with the spider's jaws having an easier time overcoming her breasts, she found that massaging them was

terribly rewarding. The same fangs that had pressed into her ass were now clamped securely around her chest, tickling the sensitive flesh. Suzu joined in, squirming and squishing into the beast's teeth while her head lolled back and forth. It wasn't arousing, but it did feel nice, and it gave her something to do before the spider's mouth reached her collarbone and her tits were just another menu item to fill its gullet.

I guess it really did like my boobs after all...

Without fanfare, the spider's mouth closed over of Suzu's face, sealing her within its body. Much like the tunnel that had gotten her into this mess, the spider's gullet hadn't been built for a woman of Suzu's size. She was crushed and pressed downward into an airless void, quickly losing her sense of space and orientation. It was almost impossible to breathe, and she felt her feet begin to go numb, followed by her legs, and then—

Suzu was pushed out into a larger opening, and once her head was free she discovered she could just barely breathe. What she'd perceived as numbness had just been the intense compression abating. She "sat" down onto her legs and squished tail, briefly puzzled by this new development. The spider's abdomen had indeed been large enough to hold her like this, so that was obviously where she was – but what was the point?

Pretty roomy in here. Must've used up lots of silk toying with me.

Suzu didn't have time to consider the strange anatomy of Exodan wildlife. The walls of the abdomen began to pulsate inward, rhythmically pressing against her from every side. She could imagine the outside view of the spider's abdomen, with her body mass pressing up against it and just barely hinting that it was consuming her. Within a minute, Suzu had grown bothered enough to try "standing" into a more stable position – then a wave of tiredness swept through her and the rogue quickly found herself seated again. She focused on nothing but her breathing for another minute, but the tiring pulse interrupted her a second time.

Draining my energy before turning me into silk? Wow, pretty greedy...

Suzu had learned of and experienced a lot of predators during her time as a thief, and energy drainers were a particularly nasty sort. She'd never heard of a spider doing it, but today had been full of unpleasant surprises. Another surprise announced itself as well: at some point the abdomen had begun to fill with liquid. It wasn't acidic, at least not strongly, but Suzu could guess at what it would do to her once she was deprived of her meager air supply.

Wonder if Sascha gave you a taste for fat asses like mine... you filled up pretty quick...

Her feet were starting to feel cold, not just numb but a final all-consuming kind of cold that made her wonder where she ended and the next batch of silk began. It was almost pleasant, the way the spider had fed her into itself and was now making her part of itself. Her whole life would be part of a great big circle, and Suzu would end up helping to trap some other foolhardy adventurers. Maybe it would even be Sascha, set out to save her friend after she hadn't come back from what should've been an easy haul.

Big, tall Sascha who lived in daylight and never had to sneak around. Succulent, juicy Sascha who would get turned into a silky meal just like her friend Suzu. Her paltry dancer's silks stripped off and replaced with a new, better brand. A soft, wriggling sack of pure white being lowered face-first into the tickling fangs. Suzu giggled at the mental image and found the strange liquid had reached her chin. It unceremoniously went up past her head, taking her last bit of air with it. The spider's insides sloshed around as it settled in for a good post-meal nap. The cold crept up to her legs.

There really is nothing like being churned into spider silk— ah?

Something hard and small tapped against her temple. It could only be one thing: her precious backup vial that the spider had missed while preparing her as a meal. The cork would probably be dissolved just like everything else in here, but the liquid inside was another story.

With her numb thoughts and numb body, and a cold sensation creeping up her body, Suzu leaned forward and opened her mouth. The ball of webbing between her teeth fell away, already half-melted.

Her buck teeth touched something round and hard, like glass. The vial. Then another pulse, another churn of the spider's innards, and it was gone.

Suzu was so tired she couldn't think straight, couldn't even *think*. She could only act, shaking her head weakly and getting back some faint vision as her silken blindfold relinquished its hold on her face. The vial was floating a few inches away from her head, spinning gently. Without really understanding why, Suzu reached toward it, and this time she got it between her teeth. Her tongue mashed lazily against the remains of the cork just as the wall of the abdomen squeezed again, and then there was nothing but black.

IV

"Dissolved into spider silk, huh? That must have been scary," said Sascha. She took a sip from her tankard, licking up a stray fleck of beige foam. The two of them were back at the inn where Suzu's trouble had begun in the first place. The rogue didn't like giving the owner the business, but the ale and food were both good and she hadn't been able to muster the strength to argue with Sascha. "Good thing the resurrection ward worked."

"Of course it *worked*," Suzu grumbled, "but getting suited up again is going to be a pain. An expensive pain."

"What does that potion even do? I don't think I've heard you mention it before."

"It's kind of a get-out-of-jail free thing; returns you to the last place you got a good night's sleep, according to the Ring of Identification." She wiggled her left middle finger, which was now conspicuously absent of any jewelry or gear – the potion had transported Suzu and *only* Suzu, leaving her gear stashed somewhere in the spider's lair. "Kinda the same idea as resurrection magic, but you don't have to get eaten first, and it's cheaper to brew than the wards are to make. Slightly."

Sascha looked up ponderously and brought a fingertip to her chin. "Well, that's handy – although I don't think it'd do much if something hypnotic got you and you woke up in its belly."

Suzu flopped forward onto the table, resting on her breasts and elbows. She shot a withering glare at the tiger woman. "You know, it wouldn't have been so bad if the spider hadn't gotten a taste for adventurers."

Sascha frowned. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Come on, don't pretend that you haven't filled out predators' guts before. The way that thing massaged me, it had experience handling big girls."

"I—Wow, alright. Let me know when you stop being so grouchy." Sascha stood but was interrupted by a tug on her tail, shortly followed by a slap to her butt. She nearly fell back into her chair with a shout. "*Suzu!*"

"Seriously, if I were a big monster and I saw all *this* walking around, I know what I'd do. So how many times did you end up as spider food?"

Sascha bristled and slowly looked over her shoulder at the mouse woman, whose hands were still becoming entirely too familiar with her waistline. "For your information, I *didn't*."

"Wait, really? But you said you'd heard about the treasure from the bartender, travelled out and got eaten."

"I said I got *resurrected*, and it was because I got eaten, but it wasn't a spider that ate me," she huffed. "There was... well, you know that swamp you passed through on the way? There are these big purple lizards..."

"With the throat sacs?"

"Yeah, and they make this croaking sound that induces sleep, so—"

"Ha! Not even rookies worry about those things." Suzu didn't bother hiding her laughter.

"Forget it." Sascha swiped up her drink, and downed it in a single gulp. "I'm gonna go get another round. You're paying for it, Little Miss Grabby."

Suzu's smirk vanished as she made a strained sound deep in her throat. "S-sure, I guess."

"*Don't* give me that look; I find you hiding naked in a straw pile on the edge of town, pleading to bring you a spare change of clothes, and I do it without batting an eye. You're not gonna wiggle your way out of this one. Besides, you've got the money, haven't you?" Sascha raised an eyebrow.

"Not within easy reach." Suzu sighed, removed the crown from her tail, the one thing that had been close enough to her body to be brought along by the potion's effects, and whispered a command word. The inside of the circlet glowed blue before solidifying into the image of a dim cave with gold coins and jewels strewn across the ground. There was a conspicuous clear patch near the portal. She

reached in up to her elbow, feeling for anything valuable and emerging empty-handed. She tried her tail next, eyes closed and tongue stuck out in concentration as she navigated by feel.

"Oh!" Suzu pulled her tail out delicately, finally extracting a sapphire the size of her fist and sighing with relief. "Okay, that'll at least cover this week—hmm?" She was speaking to an empty chair. The mouse glanced over at the bar, where Sascha was loading up a tray with another round. And another. And another. The tiger shot her a toothy grin.

Suzu wilted into her chair. "Or this *night*."