

taking it to

The Third Degree

a

Morgana Feldstone
Fritz Heinmillerstein
joint

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I, myself, have a hard time understanding how a conversation can be considered a work of fiction; but Morgana has pointed out, the very fact that Fritz isn't turned into a toadstool right at the very beginning (or better yet, even prior to the start) proves that this is a work of a very forgiving nature... maybe even artistic in its temperament... and not likely how the conversation would go if the two of them were to find themselves in the same room ever again...

#

Looks good.
I'll say. I've been looking forward to this all day.
Hard day at the office? Wait, no. Salad first.
But...
Salad first.
I don't think you understand. I need to see the witch
first.

Well, if you're insinuating that I will turn into a right witch and ruin your evening if you behave like an animal, then you're on to something... unless you want me to turn you into an animal?

Hippy freak.

Clearly, that explains it all... or is that some sort of twig eater comment.

Oh, no. The salad is good. I had no idea peaches were in season. What?

You make me blush, talking about my virtues, so.

Was I? I mean, oh, of course. Very nice, very sweet...

Sweet?

I think at some point, you're just going to have to forgive my ignorance of your Elvin ways.

Fairy witch?

No, witch first, then Elf... or would you rather be a Fairy?

I think we both know which you would prefer.

I don't like it when you do that.

Well, then, I guess, I'm an Elf, because I don't know how to say 'Deal with it' in Fairy.

'Suck it,' comes to mind.

You wish.

Different story.

Aren't they all?

Listen, Elf... you'll need an Elvin name.

Highness.

On account of how much you drink. Seriously, you should slow down some.

Says the one pouring. Oh, wait. Are you a human? I would say man, but we all know the answer to that.

Rogue.

Yes, that explains it all. Clearly not a Rogue Pirate or a Rogue Assassin or even a Rogue Samurai, you'd be wearing that stupid kimono of yours... sure you'd not rather I was a Fairy.

Your Highness...

Oh, I like the sound of that. You even got all, oh, I don't, that look in your eyes, like you believed it. Can you see my royalty?

I must confess, I've heard of the arrogance of the Elves, but every time that I meet one, really get to know one, I'm shocked by their insecurity.

OK. First, it's not arrogance if it's true... or something like that. After all, I'm High, you're clearly Low, Human Scum Rogue?

Yeah, a ranger... something like an environmentalist.

Tree hugger? Oh, you are a kinky one. No. Don't be butting in. Her Highness is talking. His Lowness will listen. First, arrogance, not if it's true. Look at these peaches.

They're fantastic.

I'm sorry. We're you talking about my virtues or the salad?

If I wasn't here to talk business, I would be smothering you in... this really is good.

You act surprised. Oh, gad. I know. Humiliating, really. But at Fairy Princess Academy, they make you take all these cooking classes, you know, on the off chance that some kink-ridden tree-hugging Fairy of a Rogue would like to shake your tree.

That's good.

So, the salad is fantastic, wonderful, out of the world, a real taste sensation, and I'm good.

You know...

No, what I know is that your heart isn't in this. You come to my forest, you come to my table, you eat my peaches, you are going to eat my peaches, no, rhetorical, a simple nod will do, maybe a low bow, table bow, no need to get up, yes, OK, that is better, but you come hither from yon, and what plunderment do you have in mind? That's really all I want to know.

Plunderment? I really am going to have to get one of those Elvin to English dictionaries.

You're a dolt.

But a handsome dolt.

Eh...

No, no. I am. See, later on, I go to a witch, get transformed, and come back here and drug you with wine...

You drug me?

You should maybe say that with sleepier eyes.

Slur, garble, mumble, grumble, you druggedly me, no doubt so you could buggeredly me, you freaky Fairy loving...

That's good. It's weird how much of a kick I get out of it when you pretend to pass out like that...

Randerly Rogue, you wilt payers...

Right, so you just sort of lie there in your drool. I'll clear the salad course from the table. Princess What's Her Name can wash the dishes later, hope that was part of her schooling, though, you know, because drugged doesn't mean you can't hear...

Mmmmrph...

Anyway, dishes, housekeeping, I'm pretty sure after I've had my way with you later, you're going to fall madly in love...

Ha! Or, er, ha-mrrrph... ha-ha-mrphr...

Hey, facts be facts, it's just the way of it. Not my fault the Fey Folk are hard wired to bond for life with whoever...

Whomsoever...

Whoever, however, whenever, they first, um, get to know another a little better.

Are you going to marry her?

Hadn't really thought of it. But, yeah, you're awake now, because you're a witch.

Duh, Elves don't eat meat. But us witches do. I can help myself. Pass it over.

You're taking the bigger...

I'm a frikkin' witch! You got a problem with that toadstool? No, I didn't think so. So, answer the question.

What question?

Marry? Are you going to marry this Elvin Fairy Tramp Tree Hugging Harlot or are you just going to break her heart, ruin her forever, one night with you, that she will long remember and regret for the rest of her life. Elves live a long time, you know, and she's what, fifty, sixty, so that's like a teenager in Elvin years, and she's going to spend the next thousand years pining for your sorry ass? So, are you going to marry her or not?

Well, when you put it like that?

Like what?

Well, like that?

Yeah, just going to say this one last time before I stab you in the eye for the heck of it Rogue...

Not a Rogue, more of a rat bastard.

Sorry, not really up on my geek studies, a Rat Bastard, you are, no doubt, already married and here you are, going to cheat on your wife if nothing else, defile some young Elvin maiden, whose sole crime, oh, catch the pun, I can see you didn't, so, whose soul crime is inviting you to dinner...

But not even me.

You're just going to have to help me out here. And by that, of course, I mean, I'll just take this...

Hey, that's my steak?

Hey, I'm a freakin witch! And I'm hungry. So, deal with it.

There's no way you can eat all that.

I got a monster I keep out back... oh, and more to the point, I think it'll make a good salad tomorrow while you're at work slaving away, gads, gods...

Gra'gl?

There you go. Gra'gl, I love being a witch. If you play your cards right, I won't turn you into a pillar of salt to flavor the meat. Now, pour me some more of that. Oh, new bottle. I like that. What's this one?

Demon Lover.

Made the label yourself, did you? Aren't you afraid of someone seeing you, getting fired, losing your job.

Eh, protestors out front.

Again.

Again. So, no one's getting any work done, hard to concentrate over the chanting.

What do they say?

Odd thing, between all the insulation and double pane vacuumed sealed R-19 glass, you can't make out much of anything, just sort of a 'Rumble-Rumble-Da, Rumble-Rumble-De'. More like jungle drums than anything else.

And jungle drums remind you of Elves?

No, the cute protester... at *Sianna's*.

You went to *Sianna's* for lunch?

Well, we knew we weren't going to get much done...

You're not taking your diet seriously. What did you have?

A salad?

Oh, right! I bet! What? A pork loin salad on a bed of stuffing and mashed potatoes?

Yeah, I think it was something like that.

I'm so disappointed...

No, you're not. You're mad that I didn't invite you to come down and enjoy the fun, but it was a work meeting...

How many drinks?

It was a work meeting.

I bet you slept all afternoon.

Thinking of you.

Who? Me? Your wife? The witch? Some stupid Elvin harlot?

No. Well, yes. Put down the knife. No, put it down. Fork, too. Fine, hold the spoon. I think I can take you even if you're armed with that.

It's my magic wand. I'm thinking of turning you into a worm. No, no you're already that. A toadstool? But why improve your looks...

You're drugged, you know.

The Elf is drugged. Sorry ass Elf, if you ask me. Trusting the likes of you.

Oh, who are you kidding? You hate the Elves as much as I do, what with their singing and their dancing, they keep you up awake at night, interfering with your beauty sleep...

Don't say it.

What that you don't need it? That you are the most beautiful witch in all the realms?

Go on...

Well, I'm just saying that it probably gets lonely here, in your corner of the forest, and the tourists, you know they don't understand, they just come for the day or the week, but year after year, living next to the Elves with their singing and dancing... and they like to play tricks and call names and taunt you...

And I have feelings, too. I may be a witch, but I'm not evil... well, OK, I may be just a wee bit overwhelming evil, but I've got my reasons.

Elves, with their singing and dancing, prancing and...

Don't get me started about their prancing. Jesus, I mean, Gra'gl, you'd think they were a bunch of frikin' Fairies with all that prancing they do.

So, you'll help me?

Why do I get the feeling...

I'll take that as a yes. Besides, I already paid you with the steak, so you are pretty much bound by Fairy Tale Law to grant me my boon. And with the double helping you took, that's like two boons.

Your wish is my... nope, sorry, can't even say it. But whatever, shoot.

First, you're going to turn me into a dashing rogue, so that stuck up little bitch...

Language? She really got under your skin. Who? Do I know her? Linda?

No. We're just there having lunch. OK. Sure, topic of hand, crush those annoying protesters and their stupid dreams. But, come on, that's our job. And this group of four of them, just sort of waltz in and sit down next to us.

I know, the outrage! And at public gathering place, no less.

They were spying on us.

Oh, no! The horror! Corporate espionage! Can things get any darker in the world of big business?

Oh, it was black and dark and mean, and I didn't notice it at first, but whenever I said something, this one girl, would just sort of giggle and laugh.

Maybe she liked you.

Well, it's hard to make a good showing with corporate, when this young little hussy of a plaything is sitting at the next table over, hanging on your every word, smiling, making googly eyes...

I bet she ate a salad?

What?

Nice peaches, tasty, sweet, fresh, green lettuce, nary a fig leaf in sight.

She cornered me on the way back to the office.

Oh, big strong six foot you, all alone in the big bad city, middle of the day, cornered by some helpless...

Yes. Exactly... or not exactly. I can't remember exactly what she was saying.

That you were a corporate thug, pure evil incarnate? Well, that's just a guess anyhow. Certainly that's what I see when I look into your eyes...

I think she viewed things in a more benign light.

What? She thought you could repent? Change your ways? She really was an innocent, wasn't she?

No. Well, yes. Or, she thought we could do some sort of mixed use thingy.

Ah, yes. The whole, mixed use thingy. 'And that, my dear board of directors, is how we can save face and dig ourselves out of our current predicament.'

The point is, she was really hot.

I'm presuming in a way that only Elvin maidens can be hot.

As only Elvin Princesses can be hot. I think her name was Your Highness, or My Highness, or something. Sort of had an interesting perfume that just sort of reeked of highness, if you know what I mean.

I'm sure that I don't. For one, I'm having a hard time understanding why the man I've been married to for close to thirty years has decided to have a secret midday rendezvous...

It wasn't secret.

Did you tell John?

No. But...

But you didn't tell John. There is no other but. It was a secret, a secret rendezvous, with this hot, incredibly hot, you keep on saying so, this hot-hot-hot young Elvin... I can only assume she was pureblood, pureblood Elves are the worst sort of sluts, home wreckers...

You're really good at this.

At what? At being cheated on? What did she do? Some sort of glamour spell, what? Her peaches better than mine? Is that it? Going to get your salad elsewhere? And seriously, who uses salad as some sort of mixed up sexual metaphor these days, anyway?

You, know as well as I did that nothing happened? She gave me some notes...

She passed you a love note! Typical! Just bloody typical! So like an Elf!

It was, like, a settlement proposal, you know, unofficial, a way for all sides to save face and come together.

And so in this very important diplomatic mission, the first thing that came to your mind was...

Yes, you, exactly. I saw you in her eyes. And as much as I wanted to grow old with her, I knew that I'd already achieved that very same dream with you.

You, my love, are an amazing spin master.

Thank you. And you, my Elvin love delight, are going to be taught a lesson in corporate politics.

What? With you? Not a chance? I mean, if you agree to a compromise.

I do not compromise with Elvin Terrorists. I drug them at supper.

I'll never sit down and eat with the likes of you.

But you just did and you will. You see... just let it unfold, you are the witch, horrible neighbors these Elves, and so, being a huntsman, or whatever, I bring over a spot of meat, we get to talking...

Plotting...

Whatever, and the next thing you know, I'm some dreadlock wearing freak...

Had a boyfriend, did she?

Yeah, and not a very bright one. Know that old joke about getting a haircut and how it lowers your ears.

OK. Let's assume I know what you're talking about.

Well, Mr. Dreadlocks, went the route of putting those stupid dangly things in his ears, so lowering his ears, without cutting his hair.

I assume there's a joke in there somewhere.

True, doesn't make as much sense in retrospect, but obviously this Elf is into Tree Huggers, so, as a witch, you transform me into that, I infiltrate their party, slip her some, wine, which I've already done, ruthlessly subjugate her to my will...

Wow, that's like the aptest metaphor for doing the dirty with you as I've ever heard you say.

And then, we 'Take Over the Forest'.

Just you and me, baby, huntsman, whatever. OK. By the powers of the kink, the weirdness, and most of all, the self-delusional powers of make believe, you shall have your transformation of state and I hereby poison the wine of the vine. No go forth and slay some Elvin Lass!

Wait?

What do you mean, wait?

Well, so, poisoned wine, right?

Yeah, that's what you wanted?

And that's what you've been drinking, Miss Witch.

You don't mean...

You know that's what I mean.

Well, that was sneaky... and underhanded... and you're not going to settle with those protestors, are you.

One does not negotiate with terrorists.

You almost sound like you have some sort of inner moral compass or even just an ounce of honor when you say that.

I would say, smile when you say that, but I can see that you already are.

I am. It's like win-win. I get my hubby, who will probably get a promotion...

Well, one never knows, but, yeah, if it works out. Johnson got us into this mess. I'll get us out. So, who do you think corporate is going to promote to the new Vice President in Charge of Kicking Elvin Terrorist Ass?

Well, congratulations? Oh, and I have just the thing to celebrate. Unless, you'd rather I just sprawled out on the floor...

No. Celebrating is good. What did you make?

A chocolate cherry tart.

Wow!

Yeah, I know. Sort of kicks that Elvin bitch's peaches and cream to the curb, doesn't it?

That looks fantastic.

Thank you. I'll have you know, I thought only of you the entire time I was baking it. What? Don't look at me like that? Big tough corporate thug? How could I not love you? And there you are, one on one, some dreary back alley, clandestine meeting with an Elvin princess, and you stare into her eyes, and all you do is think of me.

Why do I think there's a twist in the road up ahead?

Oh, that would be the poison I put in the frosting?

What?

Don't spit it out, darling. It's too late for that anyhow. Obviously, the first layer in any enchantment cake makes the rest of the enchantment cake compulsively addictive. Slices to last the week if you know what I mean. Long enough for you to activate that new credit card that came in the mail... or a divorce, the choice is yours. But a divorce... you know, the more I say it, the more it just rolls off the lips: divorce. Say, isn't Johnson's a lawyer, too? Maybe he'd take my case all pro-bono. I mean, it's got to be a slam-dunk! No. No. Let me recite the facts. First, you poisoned an underage Elf, age of consent of the Fey'en being an even hundred years if memory serves correct from last week, and then had your dastardly way with her. And then, they're simple folk, stupid really, those Elves, so she'd probably be willing to testify against you all smiling and happy, stand by her man, and not even realize the damage she was doing. And that witch, oh, I bet she'd be more than happy to tear you a new one, I mean, turn about has got to be fair play, and now, look at you, helpless, drunk as a fool, stooped over, face first in an enchanted cake frosting, brought low by your own silly housewife...

But-mrble! But-mrble!

But how? Isn't that what they always ask? Of course, it usually comes out as, 'But-mrph? But-mrph?'

But-mrph! But-mrph?

Well, I might as well explain. No, don't help me with that. You're paralyzed. I can get your necktie, myself. You know, you really should let me dress you in the morning. Big corporate thug like you, dressing himself, it's unseemly.

Mrph?

Don't make me get a gag?

But, how-mrph?

Oh, that's easy. The Elf called the witch who called me. We chat. You really shouldn't introduce the girls in your harem to one another, have them all sit together at the same dinner table, even if sequentially, they might get to know one another, hatch a plot, scheme a scheme, that sort of thing, and decide to poison you with a bit of paralysis cake, courtesy of the witch, of course, and after all your cruelty to the forest over the years, made a career of being cruel to the forest, well, we thought, but mostly it was me, I mean, 'Oh, My, Gra'gl, humans are like, so dumb, they think just because we're Elvin princesses, we're like idiots or something,' but like, with a thousand year lifetime, wisdom of the ages at our fingertips, we could just kill you, cut our your heart, divorce you, oh, I could, all this talk of other women, what a way to woo a girl, all that's been on your lips since you got home was hot girl this and hot girl that, some harlot you had a secret rendezvous with today, only, she was me, so really, all you're doing is admitting what a cheating bastard you are.

Mrph!

Whatever that's supposed to mean. Look into my eyes, oh, right, first I have to snap my fingers, and viola! See me as I am, human scum, the Elvin Princess, tricking the trickster, all tied up and wrapped in a neat little bow, and now you're going to see what it's like to be an Elf, to be one of us, bound for life, and to love the forest as we do, to be one with the forest...

M-rple?

I don't think you should say another word or I will divorce your sorry ass. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm having a hunk of a corporate huntsman lawyer over for diner tonight, and being the incredibly beautiful, if a spitefully evil Dark Fairy Witch, I can't help but feel that it is time for a little of those just desserts...

M-rple?

Seriously, dear, has anyone ever told you that you talk way too much?