

# Cursed Blessing

By Abe E Seedy, illustration by ShySiren

Arielle materialised on the Prime plane with a blinding flash. A moment later she recovered from her surprise, reducing her radiance enough to allow for mortal comprehension. Her white-feathered wings melded seamlessly into an elegant coat, settling over her shoulders to provide sufficient modesty for her eight foot form. Her eyes alone kept their otherworldly nature, remaining pools of molten gold that scanned her surroundings for explanation. Quickly her attention fell on the two other occupants of the room; a red-headed catwoman clutching an axe in one hand while the other shielded her pink-haired and equally feline companion. Recognition twitched Arielle's eyebrow and she stepped forward with arms outstretched, walking over the protective circle of runes on the floor without even noticing them.

"Sabrith, Tayelle!", she boomed in a voice like a church bell falling down a flight of stairs. "I was not expecting you to call on me directly!"

Silence echoed through the room. This was not the reception she would have expected. Sabrith, pointedly, did not lower her weapon.

Eventually, Arielle's eyes went wide. "Are you imperilled? Do you require further aid?" In an instant a vast sword had appeared in her hands, cracking the stone as its point stabbed into the floor. "My powers are diminished from maintaining the blessing, but my arm still holds its strength!"

Finally, Tayelle spoke up. "We were expecting a demon", she said flatly.

"Where?", Arielle demanded, spinning around but seeing nothing.

"No, I mean, we were expecting a demon in the summoning circle. Something that would explain the curse."

Arielle blinked, the easy certainty draining from her angelic visage. "Curse? What curse?"

Tayelle went to answer, but Sabrith spoke first. "Stuff keeps not happening. Last month we encountered a demon with an intriguing reputation, but when we fought all its spells failed. Last week there was an explosion when Tay mixed the wrong ingredients for a potion, but all we got was wet. Then yesterday we captured and transported Gh, Ghrath... whatever, some devious tentacle monster that apparently transforms everyone into sex-crazed thralls and he just never even *touched* us."

There was a pause while confusion blossomed over Arielle's aquiline features. "Forgive me, but that sounds like the effects of my blessing. What of this curse you mentioned?"

Sabrith raised her weapon again, defiantly menacing Arielle's lower chest. "So it *was* you! Why?"

"Why did I bless you? Because you deserve a reward for your tireless heroism! Rarely have I witnessed heroes who have subdued as many enemies as you! Your only flaw is the evil luck that has long bedevilled you, turning what should have been simple victories into..."

She paused as a rosy blush tinged her ivory cheeks. "...rather *humiliating* defeats."

Tayelle put a hand on Sabrith's shoulder, lowering her partner's hackles as well as her weapon. "I think there might be a misunderstanding at the root of this problem. Miss..."

Arielle snapped to attention. "My true name would melt mortal tongues merely to whisper, but you may call me the Divine Servant Arielle."

The two feline women shared a glance, Sabrith mouthing "fuck me" as she rolled her eyes. Out loud, Tayelle gave a more diplomatic answer. "Arielle, can you explain in a little more detail what your blessing does exactly?"

Arielle considered her response. "It gives you the ability to achieve what you set out to! No more shall random chance get in the way of your deeds, for the blessing will ensure no last-minute twist of fate robs you of righteous victory."

This was processed by Sabrith and Tayelle. "So", Sabrith said, "instead of, say, losing to a well-endowed demon and spending a week in his harem we would..."

"Triumph over such blatant evil!", Arielle answered.

Tayelle tried another tack. "And instead of accidentally spilling the mixture of a potion we're brewing we would..."

"Deftly catch that potion before it could ruin your capacity for good!"

Another long pause. "...right", Sabrith answered eventually. "And this blessing of yours will last for how long?"

"Why, the enchantment lasts until you are defeated! Which, so long as I am able to help, should be impossible!"

Sabrith sprung forwards, held back only by Tayelle's quick hand around her waist. "Let me at her!", she snarled. "If she wants to take all the fun out of our adventures I can defeat her right now!"

Before the utterly confused Arielle could ask for more clarification, Tayelle cut in. "Just to be absolutely sure", she asked, "your blessing helps us achieve whatever we're *intending* to do, right?"

Arielle nodded. "Well, yes, but I will caution you, there are limits to my power. You could hardly defeat all the demonic hordes by yourselves, no matter how true your intentions."

"Right right right", Tayelle responded, waving that concern away. "But if we *intend* for something surprising to happen, then...?"

After staring blankly for several seconds, Arielle's eyes lit up. "Ah, you intend to ambush the forces of evil? Yes, with our powers combined, even unlikely events should fall in your favour!"

There was a short, whispered conversation, during which Sabrith perked up considerably. "Ooh, now that's a good way to solve this problem."

"I apologise ladies", Arielle interjected, "but I am rather lost. What problem are we solving?"

They looked up at her with an air of cocky superiority. While observing their adventures Arielle had seen them give that look to many of their foes, but she'd never imagined it being directed at her. Her spine stiffened even as her knees weakened. Why did it feel like *that*?

Sabrith spoke again, mercifully shutting down that thought. "There's an... old enemy we'd like to face with your... help." She chewed on that last word, giving Arielle another burst of uncomfortable ideas as she focussed on her pointed teeth. This was exactly why she didn't spend much time on the Prime plane. It was so much easier to get distracted when you had to inhabit a body filled with fluids and feelings.

She shook that all loose before nodding approvingly. "I would be honoured to join you in action! Perhaps we-"

"No no", Sabrith corrected, rocking Arielle back on her heels as she hastily swallowed her enthusiasm. "This will be a... demonstration, you could say. We want you to come with us, but you have to promise to let *us* do the fighting.."

Arielle kneeled like a knight pledging her allegiance, the sword evaporating in her hands as she placed them over her heart. "I do so promise", she said solemnly.

"Works for me", Tayelle answered with a shrug, already starting to cast their teleportation spell.

The portal they led her through was pleasant enough, but the destination immediately struck Arielle as wrong. It was a dark, subterranean cavern, with all the light concentrated at the far

end. There, burning braziers flanked an ancient throne on a raised dais, on top of which sat a hulking minotaur. He looked up at them in clear surprise, hurriedly dropping the book he'd been reading and reaching for an impressively-sized axe. "Oh fuck", he mumbled, "it's the most dangerous accountants I've ever fucked senseless."

This was not the description Arielle had been expecting, but it didn't seem to throw off her companions. Tayelle stepped in front of her, posing dramatically with a wand pointed at the monster. "Foul fiend!", she cried, "we're here to face you just as we did before!"

The minotaur blinked, his bovine face tilting slightly to the side in confusion. "Er, *exactly* like you did before...?"

Sabrith strode forward, interrupting him by clanging her axe against the stone impatiently. "Hey fucker, ready for round two?"

His eyebrows raised further, his eyes flicking several times between Sabrith and Tayelle. Being behind them both Arielle couldn't see their faces, but something in their expressions must have given the monster false confidence as he seemed to visibly relax. "What about her", he said eventually, pointing at Arielle. "Is she cool?"

"I-"

"She's fine", Sabrith interjected. "She's just here to watch."

Every part of Arielle's body burned to join in their righteous combat, but she couldn't possibly go against the promise she'd made. Instead she glared fiercely at the minotaur before stepping backwards slightly, signalling her removal from the conflict. After all, if Sabrith and Tayelle could not handle him, who could?

He finally stood up, his bovine face twisting into a leering grin as he bowed mockingly. "Well then, welcome to the show." He hefted his axe casually in one hand, pointing it towards Sabrith in a lazy challenge. "Care to go first?"

With a snarl Sabrith shot forwards, springing nimbly across the floor. He had just enough time for the briefest expression of genuine panic to cross his features before her approach inexplicably stumbled, her weapon falling from her hands as she almost somersaulted through the air. She tumbled through an arc of majestic catastrophe, bouncing off the rear wall and landing face-down half off the dais, leaving her rear raised directly towards his throne.

"Don't worry dear, I'll save you!", Tayelle cried, flourishing her wand as sparks began to fly. Suddenly though she seized up, her arm pausing by her face as her nose wrinkled. After a quick, gasped, "oh no!" her head reared backwards, coming forwards again with a suspiciously well-pronounced "achooo!"

A crackling ray shot from her flailing wand, hitting Sabrith dead-on. For a few moments she was suffused with a violet glow as her body tensed, then with a sudden release her clothes exploded, leaving her panting and steaming as she lay completely naked on the floor.

"Oh no", Tayelle cried flatly. "I've got to hurry!" With a flick of her wrist she directed a surge of magical energy at herself, gasping out loud as she visibly vibrated. "Oh no", she squeaked, "wrong spell!" Suddenly she popped out of existence, reappearing sprawled and breathless right next to her wife. Before she could recover a ring of yellow sparks burst into life at the tip of her tail, hissing and spluttering theatrically as it travelled downwards like a lit fuse. It went quiet for just a moment on reaching her rear, then with a sudden 'fwoomp!' her clothes also exploded, landing in tattered scraps all around the room.

All of this had taken perhaps 20 seconds from the moment Sabrith had first charged. The minotaur recovered first, clearing his throat quietly as he surveyed the naked women writhing exaggeratedly at his feet. "Well, they're certainly the best there is at whatever the hell they choose to do", he said with a satisfied snort. "Even if their choices are a little hard to follow sometimes." He nodded at Arielle as he pointed casually at the two women lying on the ground in front of him. "You sure you're not getting in on this?"

Arielle was dumbfounded, but only for a moment. This had to be a trick. Of course it was, that was the whole point of their plan! Perhaps they were using their seeming vulnerability to draw out an even bigger foe than this contemptuous livestock. She sneered derisively. "My ladies need no help from me to defeat the likes of you!"

That stopped the minotaur's advance but his expression betrayed confusion rather than admonishment. "These ladies, right?", he clarified, pointing once again. On queue, Sabrith started moaning, one of the left-over sparks from Tayelle's magic having found its way improbably between her thighs.

Despite all of that, Arielle nodded, causing the minotaur to shrug. "Suit yourself."

He stooped over, picking up the wand that had conveniently landed next to him. "How about we start with the classics?"

Flicking his wrist like the conductor of a choir, the minotaur caused a haze of golden energy to envelope Tayelle, lifting her gently into the air. She stayed suspended for a few moments, apparently still so subdued that all she could do was pant breathlessly despite being so completely on display. Then the energy he was summoning collapsed inwards, causing her eyes to glaze over as it sunk beneath her skin. Slowly at first, but faster the more her resistance faded, Tayelle the noble adventurer began to change.

It started with her head. Tiny arcs of energy crackled through her hair, drawing strands together as though through static charge alone. Soon they solidified into nubby little horns, poking cutely through her hair as her head drooped with exertion. Her ears plumped outwards, becoming thick

and leathery rather than the delicate feline triangles she'd started the fight with. A sudden shower of sparks saw a small metal tag materialise at the base of one of them, indicating her formal possession by this smirking minotaur.

A 'clack' sound drew Arielle's eyes downwards, realising belatedly that the foul magic had been even busier on her lower half. Short pink hair extended almost up to her knees, making her look substantially more bestial than normal already. Her feet had been subsumed into simple bovine hooves that shifted her stance slightly as the magic lowered her back down to the ground. Behind all that Arielle could see her tail knotting together, twisting itself into a leathery chord topped with a bushy pink tuft.

Tayelle gasped out her first real breath since her body had been seized by this magic, but she wasn't given long to recover. A finger curled under her chin to pull her head upwards, letting her get just a moment of staring breathlessly at his face before he slipped away and she dropped to her knees. Her back arched with growing strain, the magic opening up a new avenue of perversity as her breasts began to grow steadily. Tayelle gritted her teeth as a tremor ran through her, then a sudden gasp escaped as her nipples stretched outwards, leaving her with the distinct impression of teats.

Arielle's eyes were fixed to that scene, causing her to start as Sabrith suddenly snarled. She was standing now, albeit with some trouble due to her trembling knees. "Let her go!", she growled.

The minotaur seemed entirely unconcerned. "Oh, by all means. Here, I've charged the wand again, but I haven't yet cast the spell to imprint her first command. Even you should be able to use it in this state." He tossed the thrumming wand casually in her direction. "Why don't you have a go?"

Sabrith caught it with one flailing hand, pointing it triumphantly at her partner. "Take care of him babe!", she yelled, unleashing a wave of pent-up power that enveloped Tayelle in a thick, sparking cloud.

At first, Tayelle couldn't even be seen. It was only after the energy sunk into her skin that Arielle was able to tell that she looked... exactly the same. Whatever bovine influence the minotaur had laid on her still held her body in its sway, from the tip of her delicate horns to her dark black hooves. But a sudden flash of fire in Tayelle's eyes signalled some new development, a look of almost frenzied determination settling onto her face. Of course, physical attributes were of no consequence to warriors such as these! They could defeat evil with their will alone, no matter how they tried to pervert their forms.

Almost on cue Tayelle threw herself at the minotaur, bearing him easily to the ground. He struggled in sudden shock, but before he could break free she'd found her grip, tearing his loincloth aside and pouncing on his vulnerable... his, uh... she...

"You have him at your mercy!", Arielle yelled encouragingly. "Though uncouth, perhaps such an attack could truly turn the tide!"

The minotaur had managed to prop himself up on his elbows, resting his back against the rear wall of the cavern while Tayelle knelt in front of him. His expression indicated that while he may have been somewhat incapacitated, he did not seem to be under attack.

Seconds ticked by as increasingly wet noises filled the air. Eventually, even Arielle could not resist acknowledging the truth. Tayelle was not fighting him. Instead she was willingly, energetically and feverishly pleasuring the minotaur's cock, lavishing its tip with licks and kisses in between sliding her lips around its entire length.

Arielle had never felt a blush this deep before. She didn't know how to react, she barely knew how to comprehend the scene in front of her. She wanted to leap to the rescue, but her promise still held her back. Besides, how could she save Tayelle from a task she herself was pursuing with such abandon?

Fortunately, Sabrith had a clearer head. Having taken the time to steady herself she hurried to Tayelle's side, hauling her physically off the minotaur's cock with a hissed, "hey, snap out of it!"

Despite her previous enthusiasm, Tayelle didn't much resist as she was pulled free. She seemed dazed when she sat back, her head physically swaying from side to side. Slowly she managed to refocus on her wife, an expression of recognition crossing her face. Then she leaned forwards, claiming Sabrith's lips in a passionate kiss. The two of them melted together before Sabrith remembered herself, planting her hands on Tayelle's shoulders and pushing the two of them apart. A few slick strands connected them for a beat after they separated, chased back behind her lips by Tayelle's roving tongue.

"Babe", Sabrith coughed, rubbing the back of her arm across her face, "maybe let's save that for later, okay? For now we should..."

Tayelle had slipped free from the briefly one-armed grip, landing another long kiss on her partner. It lasted another few seconds before the two of them reluctantly separated.

"I get it", Sabrith said while they were apart, "it's good, but we've got..."

Her fingers slipped and she was claimed once again. This time they stayed together until Sabrith ran out of breath, swaying out to the side as she panted heavily.

"We've got... got more important things to do..."

Tayelle's hand curled between her ears, cupping her head and turning it towards the patiently waiting minotaur. From where she was standing Arielle could just make out a small spark leaping between the two of them, making some of Sabrith's hair start to stand on end. Only...

the longer it lasted the darker that hair somehow got, until eventually it was clear that there were horns of her own coalescing smoothly atop her head.

"Yeah", she mumbled, already falling forwards. "Things like that..."

They were partners, of course, so they didn't fight over it. As the newest participant Sabrith had pride of place on the minotaur's cock, lowering her lips slowly over its tip and moaning in audible delight as she savoured its taste with her tongue. Tayelle meanwhile roved around its base, trading distracted kisses with her wife in between long, lingering licks of his shaft. They seemed almost intoxicated - neither noticed that Sabrith's feet were hardening into hooves as she purred her approval into his crotch, nor that her ears were drooping further and further into a bovine shape with every taste of his slickness.

Eventually though, something else became pressing enough to attract their attention. Tayelle's mouth fell into an open 'o', her sultry moans slowly transitioning into needy, lowing moos. The reasoning behind that was obvious - her breasts may have stopped growing, topping out at perhaps the size of grapefruits, but growth alone didn't account for the feelings she was dealing with. No, the flailing efforts of her fingers over her chest made it clear that she was absolutely filled with milk, but she lacked the ability to release more than a few drops by herself. Reluctantly she pulled away from her position against the minotaur's crotch, looking up at him with a wordless confession of absolute need.

With surprising tenderness, he reached down to pet her softly, enveloping her entire head in the palm of his hand. She melted happily into his touch, a jolt travelling down her spine as her teats leaked a little more just at the mere contact. At the same time his other hand politely but firmly removed Sabrith from her position, eliciting a low growl as she found herself involuntarily displaced. She obeyed the direction regardless, allowing Tayelle to be guided between his legs. At first she moved to engulf his cock with her mouth once again, her lips already watering in anticipation of the taste, but a quick tug on her teat held her back with a soft 'eep!'. Instead he directed her to move further upwards, settling her crotch above his before finally encouraging her to sit. When his entire length disappeared inside her slit in a single movement, Arielle could hear the gasp of blissful approval from halfway across the room.

Tayelle bucked her hips like she was possessed, rewarded for her enthusiasm as the minotaur's rough fingers pulled encouragingly on her teats. Soon streams of rich milk were running down her chest, adding to the overwhelming slickness that was coating the area where their bodies met.

The only downside to their enthusiastic fucking was that it left little space for Sabrith. Although neither side deliberately wanted to exclude her, the position of their bodies didn't give her much to work with. The best she could do was to snatch a kiss here and there, but with the way she was digging her fingers hungrily into her own slit it was clear that wasn't going to be enough. Eventually she brought her head upwards, snapping a fierce glare at Arielle.



"Well", she hissed, "aren't you going to help?"

The lava fields of all the infernal realms combined could not have made Arielle sweat more. "But... I promised not to fight with you...", she answered weakly.

"Fight's over! Come help with the...", she waved a hand impatiently, eventually landing on, "...after party!"

Arielle swallowed heavily. "My lady, I'm not... I don't know... I am not *equipped* to..."

This met with another exasperated sigh. "Yes, right, of course, you're probably just smooth down there, or like, just a weird collection of eyes and wings or something. How can we work with that..."

She turned her irritated glare to the minotaur, treating him to a quick knock on the shoulder. He looked up with a snort, his eyes temporarily refocusing back onto the rest of the world. Sabrith indicated the wand lying disregarded on the floor by his side, then flailed an angry hand vaguely in the direction of the useless Arielle.

"Hm? Oh, yeah, sure, whatever." After a few pats on the stone beside him he retrieved Tayelle's wand, then closed his eyes and mumbled a few unintelligible words. Energy flowed out of him briefly, then, apparently satisfied with that level of charge, he tossed the magical item over to Sabrith once again. "Go nuts", he added, before leaning back into the rhythm that Tayelle was still determinedly keeping up.

This time Sabrith caught the wand more easily, pointing it at the still-hesitating Arielle. "Let's see just how much of a blessing you can provide", she said with a smirk before, metaphorically speaking, pulling the trigger.

Arielle had been prepared for energy. She spent most of her existence as little more than pure energy after all, so adding a little more was hardly a problem. But she hadn't been prepared for the physical element. This body wasn't her, it was just a convenient expression through which she could be understood on this plane, like the uniform of a soldier or a maid. It was simple, useful, but largely irrelevant. Now though, it was like she was being bottled up. No, that wasn't quite right. It wasn't just that her pure essence was contained, it was as though the... body-ness of it was pressing down on the very core of her being. The pulse of a heart that barely needed to beat started to race, her eyes widened and her vision blurred even though she lacked pupils to dilate. Veins stood out on her skin as her arms trembled and she was suddenly so focussed on the tremors in her spine that her legs almost collapsed. Her fingers grasped at her thigh and just the way her flesh yielded to her own touch made her head start to spin. An intoxicated smile spread across her face as she started to step forwards. And then, just as her foot touched the ground, there was a lurch deep inside her.

She was truly in her body, for the first time in her entire existence. Except now that body wasn't really hers anymore.

Light drowned the room as Arielle lost control. Even Tayelle stopped fucking briefly to shield her eyes from the glare. Thankfully the brightness only lasted a few moments - not casually turned down like when she first materialised but sputtering out like whatever ability she'd had to generate light had been discarded. Instead that energy was turned inwards, making her flesh ripple and sway as whatever subconscious desires now ruled Arielle sought for an expression. Then, as her eyes once again registered the other occupants of the room, it found an answer.

Hooves hit the ground as she stalked forwards, slowly building up increasing speed. By the time fur had enveloped her waist she was moving at a jog, her body extending out behind her like a hazy afterimage. A second later and it was clear there were four distinct hoofbeats even as she broke into a canter. Sabrith had just enough time to angle her neck upwards to take in her 10 foot stature before she bore down on her, pushing the errant warrior onto her rear beneath Arielle's lower body. From here it was clear that the divine being had been remodelled into something of a centaur, except the pattern of black and white fur on her torso suggested a bovine rather than equine inspiration. Then Sabrith lowered her head, and another new development soon made itself known.

Arielle's mind reeled as her breath caught in her throat. There was such *heat* inside her, such urgent, demanding need, and her body suggested a solution that her mind eagerly latched onto. Bodies, after all, were designed for fucking. That was the whole point of mortals, that was why there were always more of them, why they kept running around doing stupid, selfish things that felt so good. She'd watched them do it for so long, why shouldn't she do it too? Her teeth gritted in her jaw as her body *responded*, her rear hips angling downwards as her new cock stretched inexorably forwards. It was big, it was slick, the blood pounded in her veins and it was so, so *simple*. She could just...

A hand touched her new flesh, sending a jolt all the way up her lengthened spine. An apologetic request died in her throat as her body acted without her, dragging every part of her being willingly and wantonly down into Sabrith's waiting pussy. With a mindless bellow she claimed her mistress as a partner, exulting in the sensations that rang through her trembling body. She was used to being above others, but in all that time she'd never once experienced what it was like to press *down*, to put a hooved foreleg onto someone's back and push them forcefully into the ground as you made them *yours*.

Every sensation was new to her, from the way her stiff cock stretched Sabrith's inner walls to the slight tickle of her tail against her flank. She thrilled as horns of her own curved out over her head; long, heavy and sharp enough to almost challenge the rack of the minotaur beside her. Speaking of *that*, even her chest swelled with delicious energies, swelling to match her partners as a marker of lewd debauchery. Beneath all of that her four-legged body operated almost independently, bucking into Sabrith with frenzied enthusiasm. More than anything else that showed how far she'd fallen from her celestial self - a mass of muscle and animal need joined to

a torso that could still almost pass for divine. And she *loved* it, loved the way it made demands her mind couldn't resist, loved the blood pumping hotly through its veins and loved how all of it was built around providing a vehicle for her throbbing cock and surging balls. Sabrith mewed blissfully into the floor as Arielle's bull body satisfied her needs through her, a snort curling her lip at the sheer intoxication of all these feelings.

A noise managed to catch Arielle's attention. Looking to her side she saw the minotaur place both hands on Tayelle's shoulders and ram the former catgirl firmly down on his shaft, a powerful shudder starting in him then echoing out through her. She could see the twitching pulse build in his cock and could have sworn it distorted her crotch just slightly with enthusiasm before a torrent of creamy slickness poured from her pussy. What was inescapable though was the expression on each of their faces; one of triumphant satisfaction for the minotaur, while Tayelle's face was a picture of vacant, orgasmic delight.

Arielle shifted her stance, pausing her own thrusts to brace her hooves firmly onto the stone. She curled her upper body over as best as she was able, looking past her outsized breasts to see Sabrith's face beneath her.

"Do you wish to receive the same as your wife?", she panted through gritted teeth. "Do you need to be filled with my cum?"

Sabrith looked to her side to see Tayelle panting through a blissful afterglow, then turned and yelled her answer into the floor. "Yes! Claim me and seal our defeat!"

In the back of Arielle's mind, fingers reached out to grasp that treacherous thought. She was bringing about their defeat, undoing her own blessing. That went against the very concept of what she was *for*. But the bull didn't care. Her balls were already surging at Sabrith's response, the overpowering orgasm crashing into her right at the moment of her indecision. She needed to cum, she was already cumming, and it was all her conscious mind could do to get a grip on that fact and shape her thoughts to fit it. She wanted to cum, she wanted to press her pulsing, straining cock deep into Sabrith's pussy and flood her with her need, to stamp and snort and cum and fuck and fill and cum and cum and cum...

When the haze before her eyes had lifted, Arielle had a brief moment of panic when she realised she couldn't feel Sabrith anymore. That passed when she noticed her relaxing a short distance away, sitting back with her eyes closed and her fingers lovingly intermingled with her wife. They were each dripping with a mixture of milk and cum, breathing slowly as they recovered from their exertions.

The minotaur stood a little further to the side, looking on with an affectionate smile. "Best they are at what they do", he repeated softly. "Probably best not to ask them to do my taxes again though. I'm *still* paying that off..."

Arielle regarded him without malice for the first time. "Am I right in assuming your relationship is not purely antagonistic then?", she ventured. Her voice felt a little hoarse, as though she'd been yelling more recently than she realised.

If the minotaur noticed he didn't comment on it. "You could say that. But", he added, turning to face Arielle fully, "what about you? What *is* your relationship with them?"

This required some consideration before being answered - thankfully, her bull body was sated enough to allow for such refined action. "I would have said I was their servant, perhaps aiming to be a junior member of their team. But if that was the case, they would have simply *asked* me to lift a blessing they found inconvenient."

That pointed comment made it through Sabrith's sleepiness, being met with a hand impatiently waving away such a petty response.

"So now, I must admit I am not sure of my place", she finished.

The minotaur nodded. "And you probably can't return to your realm like that."

"Quite so. But neither am I ready to relinquish this form." She stroked her flank thoughtfully. "There is more I would seek to learn from it first."

"...right", the minotaur answered. "You'll probably just get the one lesson, you know."

Arielle deliberately ignored that comment. "Fortunately, I have an abundance of holiday time available. I believe I have imposed myself unasked for more than enough upon these two for now, but I am sure I can find others to learn from."

Several seconds passed before the minotaur clocked her expression. He looked her up and down, his face somewhere between enthusiasm and mild panic. "Er, looking to take on another partner?"

She grinned. "I am unsure if I need a partner presently", Arielle answered. "But perhaps I would be interested in exploring a similar rivalry as you have displayed here."

He swallowed, looking further up as she stepped towards him. She really was rather tall.

"On, uh, what side?"

Her answer came with a growl that could have shamed a lion.

"We shall have to see how that plays out, won't we?"