



Kracken Job (The Kracken's of Krackens Hole #1)

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Category: Fantasy

Description: Dave loved being a Kracken.

Loved the freedom of the Ocean, loved being a creature of Legend.....

That was until everything changed....

Now hes on babysitting duty to a cave full of eggs and his tentacles dont work like they used to.

Dave wants nothing more than to go back to how things were until her.

A mortal who has a gift with mythological creatures and a Sirens song for Krackens.

Can he resist her pull or will Dave accept his fate and do a Kracken Job.

Total Pages (Source): 20

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

The rays of the early morning summer sun beat down upon Dave's exposed tentacles. The long lengths curled around the warm rocks whilst the rest of his huge mass was still submerged. He loved the heat of the sun on his Kracken skin, loved the smell and taste of the sea.

Nothing compared to life as a Kracken, in his opinion, he had the freedom to swim the ocean, occasionally terrorizing ships as he search for his mate.

That's what Dave had always believed his life would be, freedom and matehood.

Boy, was he wrong.

Over the past six months, everything that he had known had changed, his simple quiet life as a Kracken had been turned on its head. He owed that to three females. Three witches who had not only changed his life, but his brothers' and the inhabitants of his home, Kracken's Hole.

A small town that was set within a cove off the coast of Dorset, England.

There was no access on land, and the only way into the town was via a special ferry, hidden to normal mortals.

It was also protected by a magical barrier, created by witches long ago, that stopped the simple mortal folk from finding their little town.

Although it was protected and kept off the human radar, that didn't stop problems from occurring on the regular. As protectors of Kracken's Hole, the Moonchild

Witches had restored the wards and taken up the mantle of protecting Merlin's Gate.

A source of great power, and as with all conduits of great power, it was sought after by many an evil villain.

In the short time the witches had called Kracken's Hole their home, they had diverted a few catastrophic events. Although one such event had cost the life of his oldest brother, Maximus.

Dave missed his big brother, but his brother had protected Maeve and saved her life with his own. His statue now stood pride of place within the cavern guarding Merlin's Gate. Dave would spend a great deal of time there. Talking to his brother's statue even though he wasn't there.

Everything had happened so fast, and Dave hated that fact. Things had changed, his other brother, Brutus, was mated. Mated to a human, a Moonchild Witch... but that wasn't what made Dave uneasy.

The powers that had been released when the Witches had gone to battle had somehow managed to make it so Brutus and now Dave could do what no other Kracken before them had been able to do.

Shift to human... Brutus loved it. Dave not so much.

Dave liked his tentacles, liked being a creature of myth and legend, and he liked terrorizing the boats.

He also couldn't understand why his brother enjoyed having only a few extremities.

It was beyond him. With his tentacles, Dave could do multiple things at once, he could propel himself through the water at great speeds and could rip boats apart.

Although the last one he had been banned from doing.

Maeve had even bopped him on the nose the last time he had gotten rough with a few of the fishing vessels.

Apparently, he had been seen... Dave sighed. He missed the days when he was a myth, and they didn't think he existed. Humans were now on a mission to conquer the seas and, as such, it was more difficult for creatures like him to hide.

According to his brother, Brutus, the fact they could now shift to human meant they could hide better. But every time Dave shifted, it felt wrong. He would stumble and fall... and that useless third tentacle did nothing but hang there and bounced against his leg when he walked, well attempted to.

“Dave, Dave, you around?” Maeve's voice called out from inside the cavern.

Since the last catastrophic event, a new cavern had been revealed, which led to a secluded cove where he could now sunbathe without being beached or seen. The cavern also held many eggs. Eggs that would hatch the next generation of Krackens.

“Dave,” Maeve called out again.

He sighed, both annoyed at being disturbed, but also glad to see one of his favourite humans.

Maeve was a pure soul and had always looked after him.

Yes, she used the pokey stick on him when his tentacles wandered, but she did it with a smile.

Instead of sliding back into the ocean like normal, Dave closed his eyes and focused

on turning his great bulk human.

In moments this, his many tentacles vanished and, in their place, were three legs and two arms.

“Oh, there you are... whoaaaaaa.” Maeve stopped in her tracks and turned around.

“Dave, honey, we really need to make sure there are some clothes lying around here for you.”

Dave didn't answer, he still wasn't used to speaking the human way. He tilted his head to watch her as she covered her eyes with one hand and turned. With her free hand, she waved and mumbled some words.

Tingles spread over his body as clothing settled on him. Dave shivered. He hated the feeling of the material against his skin. But it's what the witch wanted.

“Phew, that’s better. Can’t have you scaring people with that thing, can we?”

Dave didn't know what she was on about, surely, he was more fearsome in his Kracken form.

“Okay, so we have a visitor coming, one who is going to help you with the hatchlings.” Maeve grinned. “Has there been any change?”

Dave shook his head, the eggs had not moved, he had checked each and every one. He had even moved the ones that felt wrong to the other side of the cave. Maeve had spotted them.

“You moved these ones? Are they...?” Maeve's eyes filled with tears; she did that a lot lately.

Dave stumbled forward and lifted one of the eggs mentioned, he placed his palm over and then placed it against his heart, shaking his head. There was no life within, he had known the moment he had touched the shell.

“Oh, that’s so sad.” Maeve shook her head too. “But the others, are they okay?”

Dave nodded a firm yes; all of the others were healthy and strong.

They would grow into fine hatchlings. Not that Dave wanted to stay and find out, it had become clearer to him lately that he felt out of place now that everyone at Kracken’s Hole were mated.

Well, except the familiars, but they had their own issues.

Dave was also aware that he would be approaching his final growth period, a difficult time for a Kracken in the wild, more so for one that could now shift.

His emotions were in turmoil. On one tentacle, he wanted to be a free Kracken swimming the seas, and on the other he wanted what Brutus had.

But Dave didn't hold out much hope of another witch arriving in Kracken’s Hole and falling in love with him.

Dave knew he was a very good looking Kracken.

But as a human, all he had heard about his looks was that he was big and to cover himself up with clothing.

That right there said they didn't want to look at him. That he was not nice to look at.

“Dave? Are you okay?”

Pulled from his own thoughts, Dave looked at Maeve and nodded with a weak smile. Maeve didn't need to know what was going on inside his head. She had too much to deal with already.

As she eyed him, he felt like she could practically see into his soul, and that didn't bother him. Maeve was one of the few people Dave could really trust. He watched as she slit her eyes at him and tilted her head.

“You would tell me if something was up, wouldn't you, Dave?” she enquired, causing an answering chill up Dave's back.

Witches were scary at times; it was like she could read his mind. So, Dave simply grinned and nodded.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Jessica couldn't sit still and neither could Edith, her little purple dragon friend.

They were both excited at the prospect of not only starting a new adventure, but also finally getting to look after a creature Jessica had always dreamt about.

Ever since she was a little girl, Jessica had loved all creatures, but the mythological ones just held a special place in her heart.

There was something so beautiful, so unique, and so endearing about them.

From unicorns all the way to bigfoot. Each and every one had been labelled and judged.

So, when she was only a baby witch of ten years old, she had made the decision then and there.

She was going to be a cryptozoologist.

Her parents had been both thankful and relieved when she had made this statement, knowing that when she set her mind to something, then she would do it.

But mainly because she was a failure as a witch and part of the Mistwalker Coven.

It had been expected that by the age of seven her powers would have come forth, and even at such a young age she would have dominated as a witch.

But alas, Jessica had produced no magic, instead she had only managed to converse

with a local school of mermaids.

Her parents had been disappointed but supportive as always, hiding from her the harsh remarks of the magical community. Jessica hadn't cared, yet her parents worried for her.

A witch with no powers, they were usually the laughing stock of the magical community, even though she was from such an affluent family. Though, Jessica hadn't missed the quiet remarks behind her back or the lack of invitations to all events.

Jessica had shrugged each indifference off and focused on her true calling, her magical powers would have only been a distraction from what was her true dream.

She had worked hard in the following years, learning from the very best and, in turn, had become top in her field. So, when she had been contacted by the legendary Witches of the Moonchild Coven, she had almost passed out.

Not only did they seek her help, but they needed help with a creature that even she had never seen in the flesh. A creature so historic and mysterious it was like the holy grail of mythological creatures.

Who could turn down the chance to work with Krackens? Not just any, though. The absolute legends that were the Krackens of Kracken's Hole.

Jessica couldn't help the side steps of excitement as the wind swept her hair in every direction.

"You are doing that thing again," Edith, her draconian familiar, stated in a fairly judgemental way.

Edith was like that, but she was Jessica's closest companion.

One she had found herself with after a scary adventure in the Scandinavian hills trying to find a Wyvern.

Edith had been captured by humans, so Jessica had relieved them of their charge and Edith had decided to follow her everywhere.

So even though she was a shit witch, she still got to have a companion. It was nice... when she wasn't being judgy. Which was hardly ever.

"I know, I'm just so excited, this is so exciting... isn't it so exciting?" Jessica bounced again.

"Exciting, right?" Edith's voice kept the same tone. "I don't think you said that word enough."

"Don't be a party pooper." Jessica frowned at her companion before she looked back over the rail of the vessel.

That had been the first surprise for Jessica, a pirate ship had waited for her at the docks, and the crew as well.

Ghosts, all of them were ghosts. She had never feared ghosts, having grown up in a coven.

They usually had visitors of the ghostly persuasion, although none of them were as active as the ones steering the boat.

The wood creaked beneath her feet as she stood by the railing, watching the coast get smaller as they moved out to sea.

From the little she had gleaned from the chatter of the crew, they had to move into deeper waters so they could get to the town at the right angle, otherwise they would miss the doorway.

The town itself was hidden by a shield so no stray humans could venture in.

If one was lucky enough, then the witches there would deal with it.

The boat rocked side to side as the not-so-gentle swell hit, and Jessica found herself almost lulled into a calming state by the sound of water hitting the hull.

With the wind in her hair, she lifted her face up to the sun and revelled in the calm.

A calm she knew wouldn't last as soon as she reached Kracken's Hole.

Jessica was excited for what was to come but also a little anxious.

This was her dream, after all, to work with not only one of the most elusive mythological creatures to ever exist, but also one of the largest. Her journal that documented every creature she had had the pleasure to work with was thick with information, hearsay, and gossip about Krackens, and she looked forward to finding out the truth.

Her future and reputation as a cryptozoologist would be cemented in history as the first to study and help care for, not just one, but multiple Krackens. Edith may very well laugh and take the piss, but she was very much 'excited' too.

The large vessel lurched to the side, making Jessica stumble and Edith flap her little wings to lift her chunky body off her shoulder less she fall off.

"Well, that's poor driving," Edith muttered as she gently set her bulk down back on

Jessica's shoulder.

"Kracken's Hole in view, portal doorway imminent," a bellow sounded from the crow's nest, and the morning mist slowly dissipated as they passed through what could only be described as a shimmering wall.

Shivers stroked up her spine as the magic from the portal rippled through her.

Edith sneezed in response, a tiny fireball shooting from her nose.

"Bless you," Jessica chuckled, luckily, nothing caught on fire. "Oh, would you look at that?" she breathed out as the small paranormal town came into view.

Set around a small cove, the town was nestled quaintly into the hillside.

She could see the town was already full of bustle, their daily routine already well underway.

The town itself was legendary within the magical world.

Home to all manner of paranormal creatures as well as the Krackens.

It was also the home of the Moonchild Coven, witches that were revered throughout the world.

Jessica knew, from the intense research she had undertaken the moment she had been offered and accepted the job, that there had been three Krackens.

Maximus, Brutus, and Dave. Unfortunately, Maximus had passed away, although only the guardians knew how.

So that left Brutus and Dave and a group of eggs.

That's what had gotten her really excited about the job, no one ever had had the chance to study baby Krackens, never mind eggs and witness a hatching.

And didn't that just make her feel warm and fuzzy on the inside.

Her family knew she loved all mythical beings, but not many knew she was obsessed with Krackens.

She had read everything there had ever been printed about them, she had books, posters, toys.

If it was Kracken themed, she probably owned it.

Her thoughts were so focused on her obsession she hadn't realised that the ship was moving into position to dock.

"Everyone off," a deep voice called out in a friendly manner; the ghost crew were already hard at work unloading supplies as the other passengers disembarked.

"Shift that arse then," Edith stated and fluttered her wings. "I am keen to get settled then try out the pub. The Ferret's Mott is famous, don't you know? I've been told their Scrumpy is fabulous, and I could really do with a pint of Vicar's Knutt."

"A pint of what now?" Jessica frowned, the words of her familiar not computing.

"Vicar's Knutt, it's a cider," Edith stated as she flapped her little wings and took off towards the gangplank. "Best cider in the south of England, according to the para pub guide."

“It best be with a name like that.” Jessica shuddered and made to follow her dragon, when one of the pirates stepped into her path.

She noticed him when they had first climbed aboard.

He was a ghost, well, that’s what she had surmised by the way he could walk through walls but when he wasn't doing that, he seemed more solid than the others.

But it was also his aura, the way he held himself that showed he was something more.

Well, apart from being the captain, which was bloody obvious from the orders he threw out.

And now he standing in front of her, she would admit he was a good-looking guy.

“Jessica, is it?” he asked

“Indeed, can I help you?”

“Maeve was supposed to meet you, she’s unable to come.”

“Oh, that’s a pity. I was looking forward to meeting her, how do you know her?” Jessica asked, a little disappointed that she wouldn't get to meet the famous Moonchild Witch.

“She’s my mate,” he said with a smile and a sparkle in his eyes. “My little ol’ ball and chain.”

“If she heard you describe her as BASTARD that, she would have your BELLEND balls,” a new voice chimed in. A small greyish-blue pigeon perched on the railings, wearing the biggest pair of thick rimmed glasses she had ever seen.

“Oh shush,” the pirate aimed towards the pigeon before turning to Jessica. “This is Binky, he’s Maeve’s familiar and a pain in the arse. Take everything he says with a pinch of salt because that bird has issues.” With a tip of his hat, the pirate vanished, leaving her alone with the swears bird.

“Pinch of salt, he's such a salty git,’ Binky grumbled to himself before he clocked Jessica with his right eye... the left was doing its own thing.

“Welcome to Kracken’s Hole, any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask TWAT!”

With that he lifted his wings, flapped them, and glided down towards the dock, leaving Jessica to navigate the gangplank and the dock alone.

Edith had vanished but Jessica wasn't worried.

That dragon was more than capable of looking after herself and, to be honest, it gave Jessica a little break from the sarcasm.

“If you follow me, I will escort you to the Hollow where ARSEHOLE we can get you FUCK settled.” Binky nodded and pointed a wing towards a small path that led up the left side of the cliff that housed the town. Before she was able to take a step forward, a pirate walked past her and winked.

Jessica would have smiled but the fact the pirate was stark bollock naked threw her for a loop.

“Mate, would you please put some clothes on? You are scaring the WANKA tourists,” Binky shouted. “Come on, it's this way.”

Jessica already loved the town; she immediately felt at home and could not wait to get settled and start working.

Following the pigeon up the hill made her smile.

There was something so therapeutic about watching his feathered arse sway from side to side.

Every now and again he would skip on one foot before going to his stride, and if there was something he thought she would like to see, he would sweep a wing out to the side and point it out.

“I’m sorry, did you just say Blackbeard?” Jessica stopped and looked back at the town; the high vantage point of the cliff gave her a beautiful view. “As in, the actual famous pirate Blackbeard?” she stated

“Yes, of course, the naked dude you saw, what other Blackbeard is there?”

“I err... good point, I just didn’t expect to see him here, that’s all... and alive,” Jessica admitted.

“You believe in mythical creatures, yet Blackbeard was strange to you?” Binky chuckled. “And he isn’t alive. He’s one of the ghost pirates of Kracken’s Hole. He’s usually more dressed but he’s celebrating finally beating Bas in a poker game.”

“Ahh okay,” Jessica answered, as if that all made sense to her. She felt like she had been dropped into a Carry-on film and not been given the script.

She looked from the town, back to the pigeon, who watched her with his right eye, the jam jar glasses making that eye look downright creepy.

“Shall we continue?” Binky asked, Jessica nodded and waited for him to continue his waddle up the path.

Her excitement had died down and was replaced with a mixed bag of feelings.

Jessica was now questioning what she had gotten herself into.

Surely, a talking pigpen with Tourettes and naked ghost pirates would be the strangest things she would see?

Or was that just the beginning?

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Maeve pottered around the kitchen with no real task in mind, she was procrastinating.

That, and she was hoping to bump into their new consultant, AKA Kracken girly as Bas liked to put it.

She had told a little white lie when she had asked Will to get Binky to escort her to the Hollow.

Maeve'd had ample time, but she had wanted to see Dave first. Since Maximus's death and Brutus being mated, and the fact Dave could now shift to human form, she worried about him.

They all did. Brutus had mentioned one night during dinner, when Dave had gone off on his own, that the younger Kracken was now approaching his final growth spurt.

This wasn't normally due for a good many years but the magic that had made it so Dave could shift, had also altered other key evolutionary moments of the Kracken's life span.

Brutus was concerned that Dave would not be able to handle what was to come, especially when a mate was also not on the cards.

Maeve also worried about the Hollow. Yes, they had housed Krackens at the Hollow for centuries. It had always been a haven to all paranormals, but never a mega Kracken. Maeve chuckled to herself. That was the nickname Binky had given Dave, and it wasn't because of his Kracken form.

Dave's other attribute came when he was in human form, one that had the men jealous and the women both concerned as well as curious.

Dave was, in short, a well-hung gentleman with a third "tentacle" that would rival an elephant.

Maeve couldn't stop the smirk that curved her lips. Dave had become legendary, and he hadn't even tried.

Still, ever since that spell had ripped through the Hollow, all sorts of strange things had started to happen.

Her mate was now not the only ghost that could solidify, unfortunately the manwhore that was Blackbeard was one of those lucky beings and he was using it to his full advantage!

Maeve had had to issue an order that pirates should be always clothed in public.

It said something when you were getting tired of seeing someone's junk.

Maeve was so intently wiping the same area of the worktop that she almost screamed when the front door finally opened.

First, she heard the slightly arsey comments of her familiar, he had developed a very judgy attitude and, boy, was he using it.

Maeve smiled at the little bird, he may be an asshole at times, but he was her asshole.

Next to round the elaborate wooden door was their cryptozoologist guest. Maeve had spent ages researching about the Krackens, but when she just couldn't get to grips

with everything, Jessica's name was the first to come up...

and it came up highly recommended. She was an expert in the realm of mythological creatures, and they needed extra body to help with what the girls now called an army of Krackens.

“This is the Hollow... TWAT,” Binky explained, having still not noticed Maeve yet. The bird and his lazy eye had missed her in their peripheral vision, so Maeve had little choice but to wait for him.

Their new helper spotted her first and went to say something, only Maeve shook her head and grinned. Slowly, she walked right up to Binky on his bad side, bent down, and whispered not so loudly.

“BOO!”

Maeve was not disappointed, Binky flew through the air like a fucking rocket, feathers fluttered, and his scream reverberated around the Hollow making the very cottage groan in response.

“FUUUUUUUUCKKKKKING HEEELLLLL BASTARD!”

Ignoring the frantic cries of her familiar, who was always dramatic, she held her hand out.

“Good morning, Jessica. Welcome to Kracken’s Hole and the Hollow, I’m Maeve. Apologies for not meeting you. I had an errand to run.”

Maeve instantly liked this female; she was very pretty, with long auburn hair that was tied back in a tight braid, and stunning green eyes. Only, it was the little purple dragon in Jessica’s arms that made her pause.

“Oh shit, I didn't mean to scare your... dragon... is that a dragon?”

Surprisingly, Jessica laughed and held up the little bundle of scales and horns.

“Nice to meet you, Maeve, I totally get it. You guys seem to have your hands full. This is Edith, she can be cranky but she’s a good egg.

” Jessica laughed again. “She is a draconian parvulus.

I found her in the crater of a dormant volcano.

Her mum had long since gone and she had gone into hibernation.

So, I took her home and we've been together ever since.”

“That’s so amazing, I’ve never seen a dragon before,” Maeve admitted, she was desperate to stroke her but didn't want to be rude.

“She can be a bit sassy, but she's been my companion now for many a year and we have had so many adventures together.”

Maeve smiled. “Please come in and let's get you settled. Your bags arrived before you did, and I’ve had them placed in your room. Would you like me to show you?”

“Actually, and please don't think me rude, can I see the eggs?” Jessica asked, and Maeve watched as the female's eyes lit up with excitement. Maeve didn't need her magic to tell her they had made the right choice inviting Jessica, it was like her soul lit up.

“Of course, let us head there now.” Pausing in front of the wooden door that marked the passageway down into the grotto, Maeve turned to Jessica.

“I do ask for your discretion with what you are about to see, my family has been charged with guarding the grotto for a long time. So, I ask you to speak of it to no one.”

With a nod, Jessica answered. Maeve didn't expect the vow as she knew that Jessica was not a practicing witch, but her action put her worry to rest.

“So, it be done, upon the moon and sun.”

Jessica bowed her head along with Edith her dragon. “Thank you.”

Maeve smiled. “Let me show you the heart of Kracken’s Hole.”

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Jessica could feel her heart thumping against her chest, the blood in her veins pounding in her ears.

This was it; she was finally going to meet a Kracken in the flesh.

She had heard rumours of the infamous Merlin's Gate that was protected by the Moonchild Coven, but she wasn't here for that. Nope, it was the Krackens.

But that didn't stop her from appreciating the beauty that was the gate, the waters swirled and lapped at the stone beach, colours only rivalled by that of the aurora borealis emanated from the depths and lit the grotto.

Jessica could feel the power, it flowed around her like a loving caress and brought tears to her eyes.

"Oh my, this is stunning," she whispered.

Edith, who had a comment about everything, was silent, and the little dragon's eyes were wide as she took it all in.

"Yes, it is, and so calming. I come down here to think and to recharge when I'm feeling down," Maeve admitted as she walked towards the water's edge.

Her foot reached out and when Jessica thought she would fall into the waters she hit a ledge, her slight steps taking her across the edge of the pool and towards a large statue.

Jessica followed, relieved to see that there had been stepping plinths placed into the depths.

Her feet hit the water, and she had expected it to be cold from the sea, yet it was warm and welcoming.

What little powers she had rejoiced at the connection with the gate and the exhaustion she had been feeling instantly vanished.

As she moved towards Maeve, Jessica could see the statue clearer. It was huge, taking up a full wall of the grotto, and was so life-like she expected it to reach out of the wall to her.

“This is Maximus, he was the eldest of the guardians and gave his life to save mine.

He is dearly missed by us all. Shaping her hands, Maeve whispered something and light gently glowed from her palms. It shone brightly before dimming, leaving behind it a crystal lily.

Gently, Maeve set it down upon the small altar and bowed her head.

Jessica bowed hers as well, feeling the waves of sadness Maeve was emitting.

“He was the largest Kracken and the kindest,” Maeve admitted before she turned to look at Jessica with a sad smile. “I’m sorry, I always come and see Max when I visit the grotto.”

“It's okay, I get it. It's hard to lose someone/something you love,” Jessica admitted. “I lost a charge a few years back, she was a beautiful soul that I miss daily.” Jessica refused to lose herself to the sad memories. “I think about her every day.”

Maeve directed them both back across the pool and led the way, through a section of tunnels that looked new, where the rock wasn't as smooth or as worn.

“I'm sorry, Jessica, we haven't started our day off on the most positive note, have we? Let us lift the mood and show you what I know you are excited to see.”

“Am I that obvious?” Jessica chuckled.

“Maybe a little.”

“You got me, Krackens have been a dream of mine for many years and you've made that dream come true,” Jessica explained as they walked out into a secluded cove.

The sunlight hit the beach just right, revealing a secondary cave, and nestled within amongst large overgrown crystals, were giant eggs.

Not just one or two or even five. No, there were at least a hundred.

“Holy shit,” she breathed out.

“Welcome to the nursery,” Maeve admitted, just as a large tentacle lifted from the sea, followed by another and another, until the giant mass of a Kracken slid its way onto the beach.

Jessica forgot how to breathe, forgot how to think, and forgot how to stay conscious.

Dave slowly beached his big bulk and slid into the warm sands of the cove, now aptly named Kracken Cove.

This was now becoming his favourite place; he didn't have to hide from anyone, and no one disturbed him.

And he could check on the eggs as well. Although the rate with how quickly many of them were becoming unviable concerned him.

They had started off with well over one-hundred-and-fifty eggs and, now, every day, two to three would show signs that they had stopped growing.

If it went on like it did, they wouldn't have any left by the time they were ready to hatch.

Not that he knew anything about caring for them.

The extent of his skill was being able to identify whether they were alive or not.

But that didn't mean he didn't care about them.

He would happily protect every single egg with his life if it came down to it.

He had just wriggled into the sand to get comfy when he heard feet crunching against sand. It was probably one of the girls, they came down here every day to check on him and the eggs. It was as if they knew he was irritable.

Only a voice he had never heard before called out.

The “holy shit” had his tentacles flailing. In seconds he had shifted into a human and stood, naked in the sun, to see a girl hit the sand in a dead faint. Maeve, by her side, called out to Dave.

“Dave, can you come help me, please?”

Dave moved swiftly over the sand, thankful he was now used to his human legs. As he approached, he saw hair that shone like crystalised lava in the sun, her skin was

pale like a pearl. His heart smacked against his chest, and he felt something deep within him shift.

Dave frowned; he had never had this reaction to a human before.

“Oi, would you put some clothes on before you hurt someone with that thing.” This voice was also one he had never heard before. It took him a while to locate as the creature was hidden behind Maeve.

The small dragon looked at him with smoke pouring from her little nostrils. Dave wasn't frightened of many things, he was a large mythological creature. Few could rival his size. Yet this small dragon scared the shit out of him.

He looked at Maeve for help, because he didn't have clothes.

He had still been growing when he had first shifted, so everything they had got him to wear now didn't fit.

He felt the magic as it whispered over his skin before he found himself still barefooted but dressed in grey joggers and a loose shirt.

“Than-k... y-you,” he stuttered out. Words still not coming as easy as he thought they would.

Maeve nodded. “Not a problem, please could you lift Jessica for me and place her over in the shade?” Maeve asked, using her magic again to manifest a small camp bed in a shade alcove.

It was also the alcove Dave used to place what few things he had.

Trinkets from the sea floor, shells, and the odd piece of treasure from the wrecks in

the deep.

Brutas had said he was starting to hoard.

It's what a Kracken did before they left to find a mate.

Brutas didn't know about his secret hoard though. One that was deep under the sea.

Gently he cradled the human within his arms, her body light, and he actually enjoyed the way her head sat against his chest, her ear right over his heart. He was glad she was unconscious or else she would hear its rapid beat at the mere act of holding her.

She felt familiar, it was almost like home to hold her and that worried Dave, these feelings were new and scary, and he didn't know what to do with them.

“Just here please, Dave,” Maeve instructed, and as soon as he placed her down, he moved away, as far away from the little fire beast as he could.

Dave clenched his fists and watched the witch deal with the human, he actually missed the feeling of her in his arms. He wanted to know who she was and why she was here, and if she had seen him in his Kracken form.

He worried for the Hollow if she had, they would have to deal with her, and he hated that stress for the witches.

All of these thoughts raced through his mind, and he hated it, gone were the simple worries of a Kracken now he had human thoughts too. Human thoughts that messed with his grand plan and gave him feelings.

How Brutas dealt with this he didn't know, Dave was sure he didn't like it, who would? It was confusing, and made it difficult to enjoy the simple things like the way

the sun would heat your tentacles if you lay on the sand long enough.

“Dave...Dave!” Maeve's voice cut through his internal chatter and brought him back to the task at hand.

Instead of answering, he grunted and stepped back away from the unconscious female. He had to keep away from her. She must be a witch to be casting spells on him like this. He had a task. Sort the eggs and then leave to find his mate.

“Dave, please don't worry, she merely fainted. I think it is due to her long journey here and the excitement. She is here to help with the eggs. She's a specialist in mythological creatures. Her name is Jessica.”

Dave listened as Maeve explained who the female was, as soon as the Witch said her name, it stuck inside his head.

Jessica, Jessica, Jessica.

He liked the name, and it suited the beauty that she was. She would fit in well at the Hollow... all of the females were beautiful.

“You will help her, Dave, and show her our little slice of heaven out here.” Maeve smiled, and Dave nodded.

He didn't want to, but he would always do what Maeve told him and he didn't want to piss off the little dragon.

She was still eyeballing him like she wanted to set him on fire.

Maybe he should ask the other familiars if they want to chat about it.

Maybe take it to one of their poker games.

Not that Dave knew what poker was. He just knew it made the parrot angry and Bas usually ended up fighting.

Stepping a little further away, Dave sat on a rock in the sun, it wasn't as good as laying out his tentacles, but it would have to do.

He would watch over both females whilst they waited for Jessica to come around, only then would he go back out to sea.

He had this urge to add to his hoard. He wanted to find something large and shiny.

Letting his thoughts drift to the many wrecks untouched by humans, Dave planned out the rest of the day for when the females would leave him in peace.

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Jessica's dreams were good, they always had a tendency to be enjoyable, but this one was different.

She was on a beach, sunbathing and enjoying the feel of the sun on her skin, next to her a man.

A large male whose face she couldn't see as the sun was shining from behind.

But she knew this man cared for her, and the way his hand caressed up her bare leg made her stretch on the sand. Silently encouraging more touch.

But that touch wasn't gentle. In fact, the longer his hand stayed on her leg, the hotter her leg got until she sat up and shouted.

"Ouch, you mother fucker!"

"Told you that would wake her, works like a charm," the smug voice of Edith broke Jessica out of her confused state.

"What the hell, Edith? That hurt," Jessica argued, looking at the little purple dragon, who stared back, a grin on the little sod's face.

"You needed waking, I helped," Edith stated before she nodded her head.

It was then Jessica realised that she was sprawled on a camp bed, on a beach, in a cove. Her head swam as she tried her best to recall what had happened before she hit the deck in what was probably the least lady-like swoon ever to have existed.

“What happened?” she asked, although she was already embarrassed enough.

“You fainted,” Edith stated dryly. “Ate sand quicker than a fly on shit.”

“I get that, but why did I faint?” Jessica was not a fainter, was never one to get dizzy or sick at the sight of blood. Or keel over if someone had gotten hurt.

“I’m afraid we should have forewarned you, but I assumed because you had worked with other mythical creatures, you would be fine,” Maeve answered. “We should have said that it was more than likely that a Kracken would be present.”

“Oh,” was all Jessica could answer. Was it the fact she had finally come almost face to face with the creature of her dreams? Had she done what she had sworn she would never do and fangirled a little too hard?

How embarrassing, she winced.

Typical.

“Where is the Kracken now?” she asked, ready to meet this creature of legend.

“Oh, he’s popped away for a bit, just so you are able to get your breath.” Maeve smiled down at her and helped her get to her feet.

“Good, ‘cause he was fucking ugly,” Edith piped up.

“Edith!” Jessica lectured. “That’s not very nice.”

“It’s the truth.” Edith shrugged. “Big too.”

“Come, let us get you settled into your rooms and have dinner, then we can make a

plan.”

Jessica nodded but looked back over the cove, hoping to get a glimpse of the Kracken. Regret and shame filled her, fangirling indeed . She had just let herself down and some.

As she turned away and let herself be followed back up the passageway, she missed the shadow that loomed at the edge of the cove as it changed from human to Kracken and delved into the sea, disappearing into its depths within seconds.

Dave felt almost relieved as the cool water hit his scaled skin, flowed over his bulk as he propelled himself forward. Had the new female fainted because she had seen him and thought him ugly? Was it his fault?

Shame washed over him as well as the water, he couldn't change what he was. Even if he could shift to human, it didn't change the fact, he was a Kracken.

And an ugly one at that.

It didn't take long for Dave to reach depths that only his kind and a few human vessels could reach. Down here was his world, his domain. Any predators would quickly disperse, knowing full well he could crush them.

Lost wrecks littered the stoney sea floor, underwater mountains rose up, catching the wrecks and the finds they had within their holds.

Lost relics from a time long forgotten. Treasures of every kind from statues to the glittering gems. It always marvelled Dave how humans would do anything for the things that sparkled and yet found it difficult to help their fellow humans.

But a Kracken could lose hours thinking about the whys and what nots as well as the

ins and outs of the human race. At least those of the paranormal persuasion didn't want to hurt him on sight. That was always a bonus.

Humans confused him but there was one that intrigued him. But she didn't like Krackens, why else would she have fainted if not from the sight of him? Her familiar had only confirmed it.

Dave felt disappointed, there was something about her that he was curious about, and he couldn't put a tentacle on it.

With a flick of his small tail, he turned.

Moving through the water to a specific wreck, one that had become his favourite since he had found it.

Not only was it nearly complete within only a singular hole to the bow, but it had his hoard inside.

He called it his home from home. The place he went to when he couldn't take the atmosphere back at the Hollow.

Sometimes seeing them all so loved up made him feel lonely.

So, he would go to his little hidden spot and rest. Letting the cleaner fish clean his skin as he thought about his next steps.

The idea of helping the female called Jessica both panicked and filled him with excitement.

With her reaction to his Kracken form he would have to maintain a human shift whilst in her presence, which would be hard.

Considering he had only managed about two hours maximum previously.

But as exciting as the prospect of learning more about her was, listening to her talk, and seeing how she dealt with the eggs, he still worried she hated him.

Closing his eyes Dave rested, he would need all the strength he had, he also would choose a few pieces of his hoard to go to his other on the beach, maybe see if Jessica liked them.

With that, Dave rested his eyes and let his dreams take him elsewhere.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

The family dinner was not what Jessica expected.

She didn't think anything on Earth would have prepared her for what she was currently sitting through.

Three witches with three familiars, a ghost pirate, the one from the ship, a very large male who spoke with an accent that she couldn't place, and a warlock all sat at the table. It could have been the start of the world's worst joke but no. And to add to that, there was a parrot.

A ghost parrot, called Denzel.

Edith, ever the pessimist, simply growled now and again and released small smoke rings out. Her eyes would constantly watch the other three familiars as if they planned to ambush her. Edith had always found it hard to trust. It had taken Jessica a long time and a lot of patience.

"So, Jessica, where are you from?" the dark haired witch called Arietta piped up. Next to her sat a very good-looking warlock. They both couldn't seem to keep their hands off each other, much to the chagrin of the cat familiar who kept rolling his eyes and making tutting sounds.

"I'm from up north, from the Mistwalker Coven. My parents are both active witches," Jessica admitted, even though she had missed out on the witchy gifts, she adored her parents and what they did for the magical community.

"Holy shit, I know of that coven. Maeve, they are super powerful," the third witch

piped up.

Throughout the conversation, Jessica couldn't help turning her head and looking back towards the doorway that led to the cavern under the Hollow.

"Bitch, how did you think I got the contact details for Jessica? Her parents recommended her." Maeve laughed and threw a carrot at the witch's head.

Jessica watched their back and forth, absolutely loving the family dynamics, no matter how crazy it seemed.

"Isabeau, where's Brutus?" Maeve finally asked.

"Looking for Dave, he's not seen him all afternoon and that's unlike him."

Jessica placed her soup spoon down and wiped her lips on her napkin, Brutus and Dave? Why did those names seem so familiar. As she took a sip of her wine it hit her, almost like a lightning bolt to the head. She couldn't help but blurt out.

"Brutus and Dave, meaning the Krackens!! They are coming to dinner. How the hell will they fit?" Jessica asked in quick succession. She glanced around the table and no one moved, instead they just looked at her like she had grown a second head.

"Err, Maeve, you didn't tell her, did you?"

"I meant to, but well, she keeled over seeing Dave in his Kracken form so I thought I would leave that little gem until she had adjusted to the crazy that is this house."

"Maybe now is a good time," Arietta advised as she slavered a huge amount of butter onto a bread roll.

“Yeah, okay, Jessica. So, the same magic explosion that created the Kracken eggs also made it so Dave could shift into a human. Brutus was hit with something similar but a lot earlier. So yeah, they can come to dinner ‘cause they can shift to human, although they are big guys.”

A snort sounded from the bottom of the table where the familiars all sat. The squirrel chuckled, “You could say that... fucking huge comes to mind.”

“Human tripod,” another followed.

“Baby’s arm holding an apple.”

“Dick like a dinosaur.”

Then all three familiars started to laugh, laughter that quickly turned into hiccups and sobs as they couldn’t contain themselves.

“Will you three pack it in, it’s not nice to make fun. Especially of someone who is family,” Maeve scolded.

Jessica was still trying to process the news. Kracken shifters. That was crazy but also absolutely amazing.

“How exciting.” Jessica smiled, she needed to add that to her notes. Day one and she was already gaining so much.

“For flip’s sake, she’s saying that weirdly again,” Edith piped up whilst sidestepping Binky, who was attempting to get closer.

“Listen, feather brain, if you don’t want to get singed, I suggest you back away.” Her little growl would have been cute, but she backed it up with a little fire ball that hit

his plate and set the contents on fire.

“Bloody hell,” Binky exclaimed and shot behind the squirrel.

“Oi, don’t hide behind me, I DO NOT want my tail singed...” the squirrel shouted as he hugged his squirrel to him.

Jessica couldn’t stop herself from laughing.

The sound filled the room and soon everyone followed.

It felt good to laugh at nothing in particular.

Jessica couldn’t explain it, but she needed this.

To others, she was the perfect daughter who, despite her lack of magic skills, had made the most out of her life.

But she still felt like a failure. She hadn’t missed all the remarks that had been said to her parents when they had attended functions.

The magical community could be very set in their ways.

A witch with no magic was no use and was to be shunned, and if she had been born to a less prolific coven she may well have been cast out.

So yes, she had been lucky to have such amazing parents but that, unfortunately, didn’t stop the bullying that went on well past school.

So, to come to a coven of exceptionally talented and powerful witches and to have them accept her for her and not the powers she didn’t possess, was a blessing to the

soul.

From the moment she had stepped off that rickety pirate ship she had felt settled.

It was like the town almost welcomed her.

Jessica had seen many a thing in her years searching the globe for creatures, but Kracken's Hole was the first place to make her feel like she belonged.

As the laughter died down and everyone resumed eating, sounds emanated from the door that led to the Hollow.

Jessica had managed to have a look at the carvings earlier and had fallen in love with the depictions in the wood.

But as she looked at that beautiful work, the doorway creaked open revealing, not one huge, gorgeous hulk of a man, but two.

"Holy shit," she breathed, and Maeve, next to her, bumped her shoulder and chuckled.

"Told ya."

The first one made a beeline for Isabeau, kissing her soundly in her chair, once again making the familiars groan. Then he took a seat, nodded his head at her, and started in on the food.

The second one was, if possible, even bigger. Pushing nearly seven-foot in height, with shaggy blonde hair and electric blue eyes... he was panty-wetting gorgeous. Jessica couldn't help but stare.

“Jessica, Brutus is the gent who’s currently stuffing his face.” Maeve chuckled as the man himself smiled and winked. “Dave,” she called out, and the second gent turned around from where he was at the counter, collecting a plate.

He seemed to duck his head a lot, trying to minimize his size.

As soon as his eyes met Jessica’s, though, she was lost. Her heart rate increased, and she felt something shift.

She hoped it wasn’t her chair because the last thing she needed right now was to end up flat on her arse in front of the most beautiful man she had ever had the pleasure of laying her gaze upon.

“Dave, this is Jessica,” Maeve did an introduction. “She is here to help with the eggs.”

Jessica smiled. “Nice to meet you.”

Instead of answering, he nodded once, grabbed his plate, ducked his head, and left. Heading right back down the passageway to the chamber.

Jessica watched as the others gave each other concerned looks.

“Everything okay?” Jessica asked, feeling like she had missed something.

“Dave so far hasn’t adapted well to being in human form, he prefers to be Kracken so when he comes up here, it’s very brief.

I meant to say earlier. Dave helped us when Jessica fainted.

”Maeve winced. “I’m sorry I didn’t warn you; I know Krackens are big and can be

scary, I just didn't realise you didn't like them. ”

“I'm sorry, what?” Jessica blinked.

“It's why you fainted, isn't it? Is being with them going to be a problem?

” Maeve asked, but before Jessica could answer, the others decided to take their leave.

Giving them privacy. Even the familiars had left.

Jessica had heard them briefly discussing stakes in regard to a game of poker.

What surprised her most was that her own familiar had gone with them.

“I didn't faint because I'm scared of Krackens,” Jessica stated.

“Oh...” Maeve paused. “So, er... because...”

“Can you give me a second?” Jessica asked, and when Maeve nodded, she left and headed to what was going to be her room.

She needed to nip this misconception in the arse, now, before misunderstandings were made.

Although, she was about to admit to the lead witch of the Moonchild Coven that's he was the magical version of a K-pop stan.

Fangirling to the point she keeled over.

This was going to be... Embarrassing.

She lifted out her book from her luggage, which, to any outsider, looked like a hefty grimoire, only hers was filled with one subject... and one subject alone.

Krackens.

Lugging the tome back to the table, she hefted it up and dropped it in front of Maeve before she waved her hand.

“Have a look and it will make sense to you.” Jessica moved back to her seat, reached into the centre of the table, and grabbed the half-drunk bottle of wine. Refilling her glass to the top, she picked it up and sipped whilst watching the witch see into her guilty pleasure.

After ten long minutes and a half a bottle gone, Maeve finally looked up. Jessica expected judgement, she expected laughter, or anger. What she didn't expect was acceptance.

“Blackbeard's balls!” she exclaimed

“Is that good or bad? I saw him earlier today, but I didn't get a close look at those.” The wine was hitting just right, making Jessica feel a little less self-conscious.

“Hahaha, that's a joy you can save for later. But seriously, you don't just like Krackens, you fucking love them. So, your fainting earlier... that was...” Maeve stopped and looked at Jessica.

“That was me being so overcome with excitement that I literally passed out. I pretty much fangirled hard enough that I sent myself into a cold slumber.” Jessica put her face in her hands.

“And he was there. The hottest thing I have ever seen in my life, who also happens to

be a Kracken, not only witnessed me hitting the deck, but also helped you deal with me.” Jessica sighed. “Embarrassing doesn’t quite cut it.”

Jessica felt a hand on her shoulder and expected a “there there,” moment but instead, she got a witch laughing so hard it was silent until she snorted.

“You okay, Maeve?” she asked, watching the witch clutch her stomach as tears flowed down her face.

Jessica waited until she had it out of her system and she was able to form words again.

Maeve’s breath came in gasps she spoke as she spoke. “Oh my Kracken! I swear, my Godmother couldn’t have arranged this anymore perfectly herself if she tried. You, my dear, are perfect.”

“What?” Jessica frowned. “Perfect for what?”

“Perfect for Kracken’s Hole, perfect for the eggs, perfect for Dave.

” Maeve grinned. “You like him as a human, you fucking love him as a Kracken. You are pretty much the perfect match for him.” Maeve was almost bouncing in her seat.

“Fate, what a wonderful bitch you are.” Maeve laughed.

“Remind me to send her a gift basket of some sort.”

“You’ve totally lost me.” Jessica couldn’t keep up, her mind was trying to make sense of everything, plus the fact she was still exhausted from the travel.

“Don’t you stress about anything, get your arse to bed.” Maeve passed her notebook

back, helped Jessica to her feet, and pushed her towards her bedroom. “Leave all the details with me, you just been the perfect witch you are.” Maeve laughed again as she pulled the door shut in Jessica’s room.

“What the fuck just happened?” Jessica asked to no one, placing the book on her bedside table before sitting on the edge of the bed.

Were the Moonchild Witches about to try and set her up with a Kracken?

Lying back on the bed, Jessica let sleep take her, yes, she was still clothed and yes, she still had her shoes on, but she let sleep claim her. Hoping that when she woke her world would make sense again, but she highly doubted it.

This was Kracken’s Hole, after all.

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

“My name was called out again in your favourite little town, are they turning their love and devotion to me now and have grown tired of your eighties crusty arse?” Fate called out as she walked to the swing set, it was the place they always met to discuss “things”.

“As if they would give me up as their favourite, they adore me so much more than they do you, and who are you calling crusty? You are just as old as me,” Baba Yaga answered back.

Instead of swinging, as was the norm, she was now hanging upside down on the climbing frame.

Tutu in place, but showing off the bottom half of the bright pink leotard she wore.

Her hair somehow remained in place, not one single strand moved from its back-combed style.

“What are you doing?”

“Trying to gain a new perspective.”

“On what?”

“Life.”

“Fuck.”

“What?”

“Are you going through the menopause?”

“As if.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m su...”

“Right, what’s this now, your fourth? You only ever contemplate life when you are going through the change.”

“I’m a bloody goddess, how can I go through the change?” Baba Yaga dropped from the climbing frame, placed her hands on her tutued hips, and glared.

“You are a woman, alas it hits us all, even though we may be immortal,” Fate said solemnly. “It is a burden we all have to bear.”

Fate placed her hand over her heart and lifted her head to the sky. “My thoughts and prayers are with you and your vagina at this time.”

“Blessed be,” Baba Yaga also had her hand placed over her heart before they looked at each other.

“Wanna get drunk?” Fate asked.

“Do pirates have hairy balls?”

“Alrighty then.”

The two goddesses vanished in an explosion of glitter, not just the normal kind but that fine stuff that's gets in all the cracks and never comes out.

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Dave slowly made his way around each of the eggs, turning them slightly and checking to see if the life within still pulsed with energy. He had already found another three that had stopped growing and he had placed them into the small chamber off the main cavern with the others.

It hurt his heart to see so many in that chamber, and he wondered if there was something he had done wrong. Was it his fault?

“Good morning,” a voice called out, making Dave stiffen. He had been anxious all morning about seeing Jessica again. He knew they had to work together but he didn’t want to see the disgust on her face when she saw him.

Instead of answering, Dave lifted a hand, waved, and then continued checking the eggs, this was his morning routine now and he found he looked forward to it.

He even hummed to the eggs, just a simple melody that made him smile, it filled him with delight when they reacted, vibrating as if in answer.

“Wow, there are so many,” Jessica stated, her gaze roaming over the eggs that were clutched together in groups of six to eight.

Dave simply nodded in response. By the blessed sea, Jessica was as beautiful as the sky after a storm had broken.

Her hair, this time, was kept away from her face, with the rest left to flow down her back in waves of luxurious locks.

Her eyes sparkled in the morning sun, drawing him even further under her spell.

“May I?” Jessica asked as she moved to touch one of the eggs.

Once again, Dave gave a small nod. He had done his rounds and had checked all of the eggs, so it was time to see what Jessica’s thoughts were as an expert.

He didn’t know what experience she had with Krackens, never mind eggs, but any help would be welcome.

Dave was keen to save as many as he could.

Dave watched with a fascination he had not felt in a long, long time as Jessica inspected the eggs.

At one point, she held one with gentle hands and closed her eyes, the egg itself was almost too big for her to hold with two hands.

He couldn’t sense much magic from her so he knew she wasn’t as powerful as the guardians, but she had something that he just couldn’t put his tentacle on.

“Oh my, you are lovely,” she whispered to the egg, placing it back in the small nest before she moved onto another. One at a time she checked each egg, whispering comforting words to each and with each breathy word, Dave felt himself falling deeper under her spell.

Slowly, she moved to a cluster by the wall and picked up a relatively small egg in comparison to the rest.

Her gasp as she closed her eyes had Dave at her side in seconds. Taking the egg from her gently, Dave lifted it and was able to feel the life struggle inside.

“Quickly, we need to get this egg warm,” she ordered before she called for her dragon.

“Edith, I need you... yesterday,” her usually calm voice now echoed around the caverns, reverberating off the stone.

Dave held the egg tightly in his grasp whilst Jessica busied herself, moving the other eggs to the side, grabbing dried seaweed, and packing it into the nest. As Edith arrived, her little wings thumping quickly, she landed next to Jessica.

They didn’t need to say anything, they worked as a team with no verbal communication needed.

The little dragon released a small fireball, lighting the seaweed.

Flames shot up, but instead of being the normal reds and oranges, they were instead greens and blues.

“Dave, please place the egg within the flames,” Jessica asked.

Dave frowned at her. “It is safe, I promise. Some of the eggs are unable to maintain their own heat so we need a bit of seathermis to help. I’ve used the same technique on the creatures of Loch Ness.

” Jessica smiled and placed her hand on his arm.

The moment their skin met, he felt an electric shock travel from his arm through his body, finishing at his groin. Dave grunted as he bent and placed the egg into the flames, surprised when they didn’t burn him, instead only felt warm and almost calming.

He wasn't sure about his reaction to Jessica's touch, and he didn't want her to see either.

He was still not used to his human body and the third tentacle he now sported was frustrating at the best of times.

It grew hard at inappropriate moments, like now, but he turned and grunted towards her, hoping that if they checked the eggs together then it may distract his body enough to calm it down so as to not make a fool of himself.

She may already think of him as disgusting, but he wanted to keep what little pride he had left.

Silently they went over the eggs, making sure they were warm enough.

They only had to light three other small fires, but it warmed Dave's heart that they were able to save more.

Finally, he showed her the cavern of the lost.

When she started to weep, Dave fought everything he had to not wrap his arms around her and let her cry on him. Like Brutus did for his mate.

Brutus had had to drag him back to the Hollow the night before, unfortunately, his brother had figured out where his new hiding place was, either that or a sneaky seal had told him.

Brutus had pretty much said his presence was needed due to their guest. Dave had wanted to tell Brutus that Jessica found him disgusting, but there was no talking to his brother sometimes.

And yet today she didn't seem at all disgusted by his or the eggs' presence. In fact, she seemed excited about helping him. Although her familiar looked bored, as if anywhere else would be more fun.

Wiping the tears from her eyes, Jessica looked up at him. "So are there anymore that I need to check on?" she enquired, and Dave shook his head.

"Okay, cool. Can you give me the grand tour then? So we can discuss where to put the nursing pools. Some of them will be hatching sooner rather than later and we need a pool to place them in." Her voice was calm and commanding. It soothed him just like the sound of the waves did.

Lifting his hand, he made a gesture to the back of the cavern. There was a small hole in the side that led to a pool, the ceiling had a hole in it that let the sunshine bath the water, warming the pool perfectly.

"Oh, this is perfect, Dave, thank you so much." Jessica beamed at him and made him feel even taller.

He loved hearing his name on her lips. Why did he feel like he could take on twenty sharks when she looked at him like that?

"Oh, perfect, there is an area over there I can use to sleep if needed, do you think Maeve will get me a camp bed?"

Dave lifted his shoulders and shrugged. That was most definitely a question he had no answer to. Jessica smiled at him, though, and walked around the cavern, testing the water's temperature, tapping the walls and then tidying the area she had pointed out.

Dave frowned, if she was going to be sleeping down here, instead of in the comfort of

the house upstairs, then he would need to make sure she was safe and warm.

Swallowing hard, Dave cleared his throat, then slowly he said her name out loud.

“Jess-i-ca.”

Her face morphed from a look of concentration to surprise, her eyes widening ever so slightly as she looked up at him.

He didn’t wait for an answer before he continued, picking out every word and every syllable carefully.

“I... go... get... warm...” He paused, unable remember the word for those things humans placed over themselves when they slept. Personally, he liked a covering of sea kelp. Maybe that was what it was.

“Warm... kelp.” He nodded, happy with himself and smiled. He didn’t understand the look on Jessica’s face when he walked away, but would assumed that it was gratitude for offering to get her a sleep covering.

With his task, Dave felt happier than he had in a while, and he also felt more positive about the future of the Krackens. Having someone to help him was going to be better than he expected.

Jessica stood stunned and it was only when Edith told her to close her mouth that she did.

“Did you see that?” Jessica asked her familiar, who was on a rock, in the sun, face lifted up to the sky.

“No, because I wasn’t looking,” Edith stated before she turned and bent over, holding

her tail up in the sunshine.

“Your loss.” Jessica sighed.

Dave was devastatingly handsome, all muscles and dimples, and with a shyness that piqued her curiosity.

But when he smiled, holy goddess. Her ovaries had spontaneously combusted.

Yes, she was a cryptozoologist, but that didn’t make her less appreciative of the male form, and by God that man had form.

Her head literally was at chest level, and with the size of his pecs through his T-shirt she could motorboat him if she wanted and he was inclined.

“Mmm, that could be a task for another time, focus on the job at hand, Jess,” she scolded herself.

She was at Kracken’s Hole to work and to finally get to work with Krackens.

Not get her knickers twisted and thrown across the room.

But it had been a while since she had partaken in a dance of no pants.

Her last lover had been a human, bless him.

What he lacked for in experience, he made up for in enthusiasm and ice-cream.

Jessica grinned; she would never look at a tub of Neapolitan ice cream the same way again.

“You look scary when you smile like that,” Edith stated, and Jessica scowled in response. Her familiar had become a first-rate bitch since they had landed in Kracken’s Hole, and it was starting to do her nut in.

“What’s got your tail in a twist? You’ve been a nasty cow since we arrived.” Jessica stood in front of her dragon and folded her arms. “Everyone has been nothing short of lovely and welcoming to us.”

Edith turned about around and sat back on her dragon paws. She sighed hard, before she looked at Jessica.

“I miss home,” Edith admitted.

“Oh, sweetie, I do too. I miss Mum and Dad,” Jessica admitted, and she wasn’t lying, she always missed her parents.

“No,” Edith stated firmly. “I miss home, my home.” Her eyes were wide with emotion.

“Oh, Edith.” Jessica called out. “Do you want to go back?” she asked, knowing full well she would be losing her friend and companion. But she would let her go, Edith wasn’t a pet, she was far from that.

“No, I bloody well don’t,” Edith snapped, making Jessica stumble back. The change in mood nearly gave Jessica whiplash.

“But you just said...”

“I know what I said, I do miss my home, I miss the other dragons...” Edith paused.

“But I am happy with you. Yes, it was home but there were also things I hated, like

being so small and the others picking on me,” Edith explained before she waddled over to the edge of the rock she was perched on and looked at Jessica.

“Then we found each other, and I’ve never felt happier than I do when I’m by your side. ”

“Oh, sweetie, but why are you upset?”

“Because I’m scared,” Edith growled. “Scared I’m going to lose my best friend to a bunch of scaly, tentacled Kracken kids!” Edith finally shouted, her words echoing around the cavern.

Instead of shouting back, Jessica collected Edith’s bulk into her arms and hugged her hard.

“Edith, you daft little sod, you will never lose me. You are stuck with me for life and maybe beyond.” Jessica laughed.

“Besides, the Kracken kids are gonna need every little bit of help I can get; I’m going to need you more than ever. ”

“Really?” Edith looked hopeful, although her eyes were filled with sparkling dragon tears.

“Oh, goddess yes, you are my wing dragon, my ride or die. I would be lost with you, Edith.”

Instead of answering, Edith snuggled into Jessica. “We are more than witch and familiar, Edith. We are family.”

There, in the sunshine of Kracken’s Hole, surrounded by Kracken eggs, they hugged

it out and cried, unseen by anyone but a rogue seagull with a stolen ice-cream.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

The small pirate ship made dock at Kracken's Hole with a flag no one recognised and a crew that was just as unknown.

The flag had a red background, with the outline of a rooster's head donning an eyepatch on it.

The hull of the boat read The Girthy cock-ral , the boat itself had better days, but then again so had most of the vessels docked at Kracken's Hole.

Slowly, five members disembarked, all dressed as the quintessential pirate with hats so big you couldn't see their faces.

Silently, they staked down the docks and into the town, not stopping until they reached the pub.

The Ferrett's Mott was Kracken's Hole's one and only pub and watering hole.

Where the Hollow was the soul of the town, the pub was the heart as well as gossip central.

Whatever went on, the new always went through the Mott and through Maureen, the bar lady.

So, when five unknowns walked in, she was already prepared.

“Hey, duckies, what can I get you?”

Instead of answering immediately, the four walked off to one of the secluded alcoves. Luckily, it was free from randy pirates. No, that would be later on.

“Are you the owner?” the remaining pirate asked, with a crackly voice. Almost like someone who had just got over laryngitis.

“That be me, honey, you just docked? First time in Kracken’s Hole, is it?” Maureen asked, but again got no response.

“Five waters.” No please or thank you. Instead, the pirate turned and walked to join his crew members. Leaving Maureen a little dumbstruck.

“Well, I’ll be Blackbeard, that was a touch rude, wasn’t it, Denzel?”

The ghost parrot chirped in agreement before it, too, glared over at the corner where the five unknown pirates sat, heads bent.

“Ghost pirates most definitely have more manners,” Maureen huffed and filled up five pint glasses with water. She didn’t even run the tap. Let them have it lukewarm. Serves them right. Before sending the order off with a bar maid, Maureen made a note to let Will know about the newcomers.

The portal wouldn’t have let just any pirates into the Hole, so they had to be paras of some kind.

“Denzel, ducky, let your besties know about this, would you?” Maureen asked as Denzel chirped again, winked and vanished.

“We made it,” one of the five new pirates whispered after the bar maid had delivered the pints of water.

“Shush, they will hear you, why the fuck did you get water?” another said as they picked up their drink, the multiple rings making tinging sounds on the glass as they wrapped their hands around it.

“I dunno, okay? I panicked. She started asking questions. Remember, they guard this place like the Crown Jewels,” the leader spoke out.

“They can’t be that good. We got in, didn’t we? And it didn’t take much. That spell we bought is working and holding steady.”

“We can’t just rely on that, though; we need to grab the cargo and get gone. The Krackens....”

“Are mythical, it’s only a story to keep people away from this place. Hell, who would even come here? What kind of name is Ferrett’s Mott anyway? This place gives me the ick.”

“Everything gives you the ick, stop with your moaning. We’ve got a job to do. Drink your water then we scout the town, but don’t make it obvious. One of you find food and meet back at the ship in two hours.”

With a clink of glasses, they nodded.

Their hats were so big they missed Denzel sat above them, his eyes narrowing with each word. Before they left, he once again vanished back to the Ferrett’s Hole . A side building off the Mott just for the familiars.

The boys would need to know.

Page 10

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

“Order order, this meeting is in session,” Binky called out.

“Bas, get off my tail, I’ve told you before you can look but not fucking touch,” Grundlepus called out, and twisted so his tail slid from the squirrel’s grasp, and he sat on it.

“But it’s so soft, I like touching it.”

“Touch your own.”

“I do.” He grinned and winked. “Regularly.”

“Dirty bastard.”

“Oh, I like it when you talk dirty to me.”

“FUCK... come on, guys, cut it out,” Binky complained as they continued their back and forth.

“Are they always like this?” Edith asked, and Binky nodded.

“Yes, unfortunately. I’m sorry this is such a poor welcome,” Binky apologised and adjusted his glasses.

Binky, like Edith, was quirky yes, but he had a heart of gold and adored his witch.

If Edith was honest, all of the familiars were lovely...

on their own. But together it was carnage unless they were playing poker.

That seemed to be the only way they could be in the same room together without trying to piss each other off.

The banter during the night before poker match was an eye opener, that was for sure.

“It’s all good, hun, don’t worry. I’ve seen worse,” Edith admitted.

Before Jessica had found her, she had been left on her own by her mother.

Apparently, Dragons left the nest early.

Edith knew it was bullshit but she had been left to fend for herself and to deal with the bullies of the clan.

Those bitches gave her a hard lesson in learning to not let anything break her spirit.

She had never admitted to Jessica how actually broken she had been and that their meeting was not only welcome, but a blessing from the goddess.

It was why she had been so scared to lose Jessica.

“I’m sorry,” Binky stated and looked at her. His big eyes blinked slowly behind his rimmed glasses, and she just knew the little bird saw her and understood.

‘It’s okay,’ she whispered before tuning to look at the other two familiars who had yet to give up arguing.

The ghost parrot known as Denzel sat nearby, waiting patiently. It had been him who called the impromptu meeting in the Ferrett’s Hole.

Taking a small breath in, Edith released it slowly, sending a small flame shooting out, just enough to singe the whiskers on both Grundlepus and Bas.

“AHHHHHHHHH!”

“FUCK FUCK FUCK, my tail!”

Binky snorted and Edith grinned as both the cat and squirrel danced about. All that was singed was their whiskers, yet they both were more bothered about their tails, making Edith and Binky shake their heads.

“Why did you do that?” Grundlepus complained as he hugged his tail to his chest.

“Fuckers, how dare you?” Bas growled out as he too hugged his tail. “You could have permanently disfigured us.”

“Oh, BELLEND, shut up, Denzel has something to say to us, he’s been waiting for you two pilocks to finish TWAT talking shit,” Binky chastised the two. Edith could see why Binky was the familiars’ unofficial leader. Despite the Tourettes, he commanded the respect of the rest.

“Denzel, please go-ahead ARSE.”

Dropping down onto the table, Denzel ruffled his ghostly feathers. “Me hearty’s, a tale I must tell.”

Edith blinked; she expected the parrot speak but she did not expect this. She leant into whisper to Binky, “Does he really talk like that?”

“I couldn't say, this is the most he’s spoken since we met him,” Binky whispered back and adjusted his specs.

“A foul deed be afoot. Villains in Kracken’s Hole there be.” Denzel lifted his wings to gesture, although the effect was lost as there was almost no feathers left and he was a ghost, so they were transparent. “I warn ye, these pirates be up to no good.”

“Denzel mate, we are surrounded by pirates, and most of the time they are up to no good, especially Blackbeard,” Bas stated.

“I know, the amount of time I’ve seen that man’s balls, it should be made illegal,” Grundlepus chimed in.

“They are big though, so fair play, I can’t blame the man for wanting to show them off,” Bas answered, and the cat nodded in agreement.

“Nay me hearty’s, be pirates of the real variety,” Denzel called out and ruffled his feathers.

It was Binky that answered this time. “But we class all of you as real pirates,” he paused, adjusted his glasses, and continued. “You mean alive pirates?”

Denzel nodded vigorously.

“So we have alive pirates in Kracken’s Hole, that are here to cause issues. Okay, team, let’s keep an eye out for these villains as Denzel described them.”

“Are we telling the girls?” Grundlepus spoke up, stroking his tail nervously.

“No, we can handle this. The girls have enough on their plates as it is,” Binky stated. “We can sort this out and the girls will be none the wiser.”

Edith wasn’t so sure, but she kept quiet. If she was honest, she really enjoyed the fact they had included her in this little meeting, and it had been a while since she had been

in a decent fight. A chance to blow off some steam and protect sounded like a bloody good way to spend her day.

“I’m game,” was all she said before she sat back and sipped from her pint glass. The pint of Vicar’s Knutt was as good as she had expected. Feeling lighter than she had in a while, Edith let herself relax as the other familiars planned the pirate’s comeuppance.

Page 11

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Dave had returned from the depths with his small stash of sparkly stuff. He had a plan to decorate the area that Jessica had pointed out, the one she was thinking would make a great area to stay.

If Dave actually stopped long enough, he would wonder why, all of a sudden, the comfort and care of a human female was so important to him, but he hadn't stopped, and he didn't want to think too deeply into it.

For the first time since he had been hit by the spell that meant he could shift, he felt more comfortable in his own skin.

And by that, he meant human and Kracken.

The interaction with Jessica was a positive step and he, in all honesty, needed the help with the hatchlings.

Life would most certainly be getting little more crazy as each egg hatched, so to have someone with him to help with the madness was a blessing.

As he walked through the cavern, he remembered Jessica mentioned briefly about needing a camp bed. The one Maeve had created for Jessica to lie on was still there, so he collected that and headed to the nursing pools and the area Jessica had pointed out.

Isabeau had been really helpful, too, he always found her easy to talk to and when he asked about Jessica's request, she had come through, leaving him a bag of things at the cavern.

With the camp bed in place, Dave focused on making it comfortable. Blankets and pillows came out of the bag as well as fairy lights, a bedside lamp, and even a mirror.

Before he knew it, a couple of hours had flown past, and he now stood in a cave bedroom that he hoped would make Jessica happy.

“Dave, are you in here?” Jessica’s voice echoed as she called to him.

Stepping out of the cavern with the nursing pool, he waved to her. She had a large bag on her back as she hurried over to him. She was alone, her dragon familiar not present this time, which he was thankful for.

“Ahh, there you are. Isabeau said you were down here, although she was smirking and I found it a little bit frightening.” She smiled up at him and took her bag off her back. It hit the dirt floor with a thud. “Oh bugger, I really shouldn’t throw this around,” she grumbled and went to pick it up.

Placing his hand on her shoulder Dave stopped her, picking up the bag for her.

“Oh, wow, thank you.” Her smile was wide and, in turn, that made Dave want to smile as well.

Tilting his head slightly, he then moved to walk into the cavern, he wanted to show her what he had done.

Dave loved the sound of Jessica’s voice, even as she chatted away about what was happening in the house upstairs.

She told him that all the familiars had vanished.

Although everyone had guessed they were at the pub, as that’s where they usually

went.

As they rounded the pool, he heard her stop.

“Hey, Dave, what’s that?” She pointed to the small cave that now sported a curtained doorway. The gauzy material fluttering in the breeze. Lifting a hand, he waved her in front.

“For you,” he said, focusing on each word just like Maeve had taught him.

“Oh.” Her answer came out as a squeak as she moved past him to the curtain. Gently, she moved it aside to reveal all the work he had done.

“Oh, my goddess,” she breathed out, and he followed her in, placing her large bag on the small bed.

“You like?” he questioned, really wishing he had practiced using his voice more.

“Err yeah, this is amazing. Don’t get me wrong, I love the room they’ve given me upstairs, but when I’m working I’m so used to camping out that it felt wrong.

This...” She paused and did a spin. Her face lit up with happiness.

“This is unbelievable and cosy and perfect.” She laughed as she moved about the small space, picking up things to look at them before putting them back.

Dave had been very particular on what treasures he wanted to bring back from his hidden hoard.

He hadn’t brought much, but he thought she would like the two pink crystal orbs, and an abalone shell filled with pearls and other gems. He had another item in his pocket,

and he wasn't sure why he had picked it up, but it would stay in his pocket for now.

"Did you do all this for me, Dave?" Jessica asked, and he ducked his head and nodded.

"Yes," he answered.

"This is fabulous. Thank you so so much." She bounced with excitement and started to unpack her bag.

Dave stepped out of the cavern to give her a moment, plus he needed a quick breath himself. He was becoming attached, and he knew it.

A cracking sound broke the quiet, making Dave bolt for the cavern where all the eggs were housed.

"Dave?" he heard Jessica's voice, but he had to get to the egg before the hatchling broke free completely.

He almost flew over the rocks that littered the cavern floor, drawn only by the sound of the breaking egg.

Finally, he found it, the egg that Jessica had saved the day before was vibrating, cracks covered the surface of the little blue and green egg.

Dave could see the broken pieces move and flex as the hatchling inside fought for freedom.

Dave hummed to the egg as he climbed into the nest, squeezing his large bulk into the small area, careful to not hurt the other eggs.

He heard Jessica's light footsteps approach, and without asking any question she stood next to the nest, her sleeves already rolled up, her hair tied back away from her face.

"Come on, little one, you can do it," she cajoled to the egg, urging the hatchling out.

Slowly, each piece of the egg broke away, and each time a hint of the hatching inside was revealed.

Hours passed, and the day eased away into the evening.

Light from multiple sconces filled the cavern until finally the first Kracken hatchling of Kracken's Hole was born.

It was smaller than he expected, but Dave picked up the wriggling mass of tentacles and climbed out of the nest to head to the nursing pool.

"Oh my, how cute. Is it a he or she, Dave?" Jessica asked.

Dave wasn't sure, and he wasn't about to look now, it was hard enough to keep hold of the little one.

Stepping into the pool, ignoring the fact his clothes were getting soaked, he sat in the water and gently lowered the hatchling.

Like a Kracken to water, the moment it submerged it shot off into the deeper area of the pool, twisting and turning, and getting used to being out of the confines of the egg.

Dave couldn't stop the little smile that graced his lips as he watched, this was the next generation of Krackens. It was no longer just him and his brother.

“That’s a girl,” Jessica called out from the other side of the pool where the hatchling was playing with her, the tentacles reaching out for her as she looked over the little one.

“Small in size in comparison to what I believe is the norm, but great colouring, eyes are bright, and she’s very active.”

Dave watched as Jessica filled in her notebook as she measured and weighed the hatchling, only the sound of more cracking pulled him away. Their night was about to be a busy one, and yet with Jessica by his side, Dave was looking forward to it.

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Bruce rolled out the aged, yellow parchment and spread it across the table in the captain's cabin.

The boat rocked slightly with the ripple of the waves, and items that had not been stowed away rolled this way and that.

The cabin itself was sparsely furnished, with only a table, a few chairs, and a small bed off to one side.

The window let in the early morning light, the dawn a stunning mix of colours, but the sight was forgotten by the crew as they looked to their captain.

"This is the target," the captain pointed to the centre of the map using a small dagger.

All five members of the crew pressed against the table to look closer, until one started to cough. Each cough echoed and sounded more like a squawk.

"Come on, Pansy, cough it up," the crew member next to them patted their back.

When all had quietened again, the captain continued.

"We must strike hard and fast, get in and out before they deploy their weapons."

"What weapons? You never said anything about weapons."

"You said this was a no risk job."

“I just came to get out of that shit hole we lived in.”

“I came for the food.”

“Have you lot bloody finished?” the captain shouted. He made to stab the table with the dagger, only when it hit the table, it flew out of his hand and out through the window into the water.

“Did you mean to do that?” one asked, and they all looked at the captain who was just as shocked as them.

“Anywho, back to the plan. We get in, grab it, and get out, back to the boat and we leave. No fannyarsing about.” They all nodded, standing a little taller. Until the smallest of them spoke.

“What are we stealing again?”

Groans erupted from all the members, and one took the opportunity to slap them upside of the head.

“We wait for night fall,” the captain stated. “Now, go and prepare.” Turning his back, he looked out of the window. Standing tall, the captain placed his arms behind his back, looking every bit the part of a pirate.

As the others shuffled off to "prepare", they couldn't help but chatter.

“No, seriously, what are we stealing again?”

“Do you ever listen?”

“Yes, but the captain never said what we are stealing.”

“Of course he did.”

“Then what is it?”

“Errrrr... I errr, nope, I don’t know either.”

“See, how the hell can we prepare when we don’t know what we are stealing?”

“Shhh, don’t let the captain hear you, just go with it.”

“I’ve got a bad feeling about this.”

“Naa, that’s wind, fart it out and it will be fine.”

“Anyone got a biscuit?”

As the light of the morning streamed into the nursing pool, Jessica’s body protested, she had been up all night.

The night had been long and arduous. In total, ten hatchlings had broken free of their shells and were now splashing away happily within the pools.

Jessica may have been bone tired, but she was deliriously happy.

She had helped these beautiful babies come into the world and they were stunning.

They were each different in colours and markings, with blues and greens all the way to purples and reds.

So many variations, their little faces and wide green eyes nearly gave Jessica cuteness overload.

“Are. You. Well?” Dave asked as he approached from carry the last hatchling of the night to the pool.

It had taken him a good ten minutes to detach each of the little tentacles from his arm.

Each time he detached one, another stuck back on.

This little one had been one of the smaller eggs and now saw Dave as more of a mother figure.

It was so adorable that Jessica couldn't help but smile.

“I am tired, but I'm great,” she admitted and blinked sleepily.

“Thank you,” Dave said, and Jessica turned towards him.

“There is no need to thank me, I should be thanking you.” And that was the truth. Being present at such a time was an honour and a privilege.

Turning, she faced Dave, his handsome face and stunning green eyes were hidden by the fall of his hair over his face. Gently, she reached up and pushed it away.

“Thank you for letting me be a part of this,” she stated, yet when she went to move her hand away, he held it in place, holding it to him as he rubbed his cheek against her palm.

Tingles erupted at his touch, making her heartrate increase.

Jessica didn't try to pull her hand away.

In fact, she wanted to get closer. Since the very first moment she saw Dave, she had

been attracted to him, who the hell wouldn't be?

But since they had started to deal with the hatchlings, seeing him act so gentle and kind was the biggest turn on for her.

She knew he was a Kracken himself and, surprisingly, that didn't bother her. In their world, shifters were the norm.

"Dave?" she asked gently, and waited for his green gaze to meet her own. The world disappeared, it was only them, even the sounds of hatchlings splashing had vanished as if they had been placed into a bubble.

"Would you..." She paused, changing her mind because she didn't want to come off as rude. Biting her lip, she stopped herself blurting out the words.

Instead, a large palm cupped her cheek and tilted her head to look up, once again green meeting green.

"Ask," Dave stated simply, his voice deep and calming.

"Can I see... you?" She blushed. "Your true self?"

Dave's eyes widened, yet he didn't pull away, she watched as he frowned, looking away before he met her gaze again.

With a single nod he released her cheek, the loss of his warmth was instant, but it didn't last for long as he took her hand and pulled her out of the nursing pool. Jessica had a job to keep up with Dave's giant steps, but once they were out of the caverns and onto the small cove, he stopped.

His chest heaved in and out and he looked a little lost. Jessica placed her hand on his

arm and smiled.

Nothing needed to be said as he moved. He gently lifted her by the waist and walked across the sand to the shore, by a group of large rocks jutting out from the water. As if she weighed nothing Dave placed her on a rock, high enough that she didn't get wet before he stepped away.

Jessica expected to see Dave shift, ripping through his clothes and bursting into Kracken form, but that didn't happen.

Instead, she got more than what she bargained for and was prepared for. Slowly, Dave stripped. First the jumper, which was then folded and placed onto another rock, then his shoes and socks. Each movement was slow and careful, as well as painful in anticipation for Jessica.

Then his T-shirt went, revealing a torso that should have been banned, it would be her downfall and if any other woman saw it, it would be hers too.

Muscles jumped and flexed. Pectorals that looked as if carved from stone that led to the world's finest eight pack.

Biceps flexed and his skin gleamed in the early morning sunlight.

When he moved just right, his skin had an iridescent sheen to it.

Jessica was so focused on the ripple of pecs and abs that it took her a long few moments to realise that he had continued his strip tease, and now standing gloriously naked.

"Holy shit," she breathed out as her eyes wandered lower. Considering they were in her skull, she should have full control, but she didn't. They wandered and stopped

and stared.

Dave was a Kracken, yes, he also was a Kracken as a human too. Long, thick, and guaranteed to make a girl's eyes water.

Jess, stop looking at it, eyes up, girl, stop it... seriously, stop looking at it.

With more force than she ever thought she would need, Jessica lifted her eyes to meet Dave's. She expected a touch of embarrassment yet there was none, instead he tilted his head almost like a dog does and smiled.

"Okay?" he asked. Oh, she was more than okay. The day was starting off fabulously.

"Yes, I'm okay," she replied and smiled back.

"Not find me... disgusting?" he asked and now she saw it; the uncertainty in his voice, his eyes showing a sadness that Jessica had missed.

"No, god no. who called you that?" She jumped off the rock and into the water, only she didn't expect it to be so deep.

But then again, she wasn't a giant Kracken man like Dave.

In a flash, she was held against a naked chest with his "tentacle" smacking her leg.

It thumped against her thigh like an elephant's trunk.

"You okay?" he asked as he swept her hair away from her face.

"Yes, sorry, didn't realise it was that deep." She patted his chest, unable to stop herself from touching his skin, or the muscle for that matter. "Who said you were

disgusting? ‘Cause they are very wrong.”

“Everyone tells me to dress, they turn away quickly, not wanting to see me,” he admitted, and Jessica fought the need to giggle.

She knew exactly why, any man that looked the way Dave did was going to get ogled. But because he was family the guys here were trying to give him the respect he deserved.

Although Jessica would be having words with Maeve when she next saw her, she could have forewarned her about certain details.

“You are perfectly fabulous to look at, Dave, as human.” She grinned. “The jury is out on your other side.”

Placing her back on the rock Dave stepped back. With one of his devastating grins he dived beneath the surface of the water. Jessica had wanted to see him shift, but that was something she could always request later. A few minutes passed and nothing, Jessica started to worry. Then she felt it.

A gentle grip to her ankle alerted her to a tentacle as it slid up the rock to her and wrapped around her leg.

Soon, it was followed by the others, all sliding slowly up the rocks until they surrounded her.

She found herself picked up and carried in a cradle of long limbs, before the bulk of Dave finally made an appearance and, in turn, made Jessica’s dreams come true.

His bulk was a multitude of colours; blues and greens that got darker and more intense closer to his face.

Scales with flecks of purple and orange framed his eyes, and every single part of him down to the end of his tentacles held that iridescent sheen.

But it was his eyes that held Jessica captive.

Green, deep, dark, and mesmerising. They promised her the secrets of the sea, and yet also a fragility that Jessica wanted to protect.

Seeing a full-grown Kracken for the first time was everything she had hoped, knowing who he was made it all the more special.

Yet there was one thing that played on her mind and in her heart.

Was she falling for a Kracken, and how could it happen so quickly?

Ignoring that for now, she stroked a hand up and down the tentacle that was wrapped gently around her waist, and placed the other hand on Dave's head. Beaming, she couldn't hold back.

“Holy fucking shit, you are amazing.”

Page 13

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Maeve, Arietta, and Isabeau stood and looked over the nursing pool, all showing shock in a variety of facial expressions. They hadn't expected the eggs to already be hatching, and definitely not as many at the same time as there were.

"I did not expect them to be do damn cute," Isabeau admitted as she bent down and sat on the edge of the pool, letting one of the hatchlings wrap its tentacle around her hand.

"Cute, cute? I think you are using the wrong word. What I think you mean to say is they are fucking adorable," Arietta squealed and bent down against the nursing pool to stroke the head of a hatchling that was hanging out of the pool.

"We are never going to be able to get anything done, these guys are amazing," Isabeau giggled.

Maeve laughed and looked around. She couldn't see Dave or Jessica around, and she knew they had had a very busy night bringing all of the hatchlings out of their eggs and into the pools. There were still so many eggs left to hatch, Maeve worried they didn't have the room.

Leaving her cousins cooing over the hatchlings Maeve went in search.

She found the cave that had been kitted out for Jessica to rest in for when she couldn't make it up to the house, she couldn't help but smile at how nice Dave had made it feel.

Maeve had been initially worried about him, worried he would leave Kracken's Hole

in his search for a place to belong and a mate.

But as she rounded the corner and went through the cave entrance that led out onto the small beach and cove, all worries she had just vanished.

Dave was in his massive Kracken form playing catch with a highly entertained and very happy Jessica.

Well, by her screams of laughter, Maeve assumed she was enjoying herself.

Had Dave found the one meant for him? She smiled and lifted her face to the sun.

Maeve thanked the goddess as well as her godmother and friends.

Because she was sure they had something to do with the series of events.

As far as they were aware, Maximus, Brutus, and Dave had been some of the few Krackens left. So, for them to leave to search for a mate may not have been a fruitful search. The fact they could now shift had, in short, opened up doors for the evolution of their race.

With the addition of the hatchlings, Krackens would no longer be on the verge of extinction. It also meant Kracken's Hole would always have Krackens and, in turn, the guardians would always have protectors.

For the first time in a while, Maeve's heart felt light. Gentle hands slid around her waist and wrapped her in a hug. Lips pressed against her neck before her mate and the love of her life settled his chin on her shoulder.

"Well, I didn't expect that," Will admitted.

“I did.” Maeve chuckled. “That girl is obsessed with Krackens, what better mate than a Kracken shifter?”

“Does Dave feel the same way?” Will enquired, pulling her tighter against his chest. Maeve would never get enough of her pirate. Even now, he gave her butterflies and a simple touch from him could send her into a weak mess of emotions.

“What do you think, my love?” she questioned. “Just look at him. When was the last time you saw him this animated in Kracken form? For the last month or so he’s been so quiet and kept to himself, I was starting to worry.”

In silence, they stood and watched, voyeurs of the cleanest kind.

They both couldn’t help giggle as Dave launched Jessica into the air, but when Dave spotted them he started to wave his tentacles, forgetting about Jessica.

Her scream and then sudden splash made the look of worry and guilt on Dave’s face so funny, both Maeve and Will couldn’t stop laughing.

Even as he fished her out of the water and gently set her on a rock.

Maeve knew, possibly even before Jessica and Dave knew, that they were meant to be together.

Call it witchy instincts or fate.

It didn’t matter, what would be, would be.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

The swings were empty, so was the small roundabout and the climbing frame, but on a bench overlooking Kracken's Hole sat Baba Yaga again. She usually would be on the swings, but today she didn't feel in the mood.

Sometimes swinging just wasn't enough.

Sometimes, she needed to make like a big girl and watch the world from her bench.

Only, her world revolved around this town and the people and creatures within.

She never, not in all of her long years...

and when she said they were long, she meant she had knickers that were older than the coastline itself never mind the town...

She digressed...

She had never, not in all her "long years", expected Kracken's Hole to become so important to her.

The long line of witches who guarded Merlin's Gate had always impressed her, but the Moonchild cousins, now they were family.

She was after all, Godmother. So, this town had gone from being under her watch to being hers to care for.

The magic that had created the new Krackens had not been her doing. She smiled.

She had heard Maeve give thanks, although why she included Fate, she didn't know, the wench had nothing to do with it. She was currently off in Benidorm getting a tan on her pasty arse.

But yes, she had heard Maeve, and as much as she would usually take credit she couldn't.

Whatever master plan the universe had for them had nothing to do with her, but that didn't mean she wouldn't keep a close eye on things.

The fact all three girls were owning their roles as guardians made her smile.

Baba Yaga was not sentimental, she might be a tad emotional now and again, but sentimental was not her thing but... in her old age she felt she appreciated the little things more.

Like watching those hatchlings being born, and Blackbeard out in his glory, she sighed.

She always enjoyed that one. But what hit the most, was the fact that Kracken's Hole, the Hollow, and Merlin's Gate, was now a home.

The magics were no longer erratic and things had settled into a happy thrum of life.

She no longer worried, because her girls had it covered.

But that also didn't mean she didn't want to get involved. Smiling, Baba Yaga clicked her fingers, and her outfit changed. Gone were her eighties themed leg warmers and tutu, instead she was dressed as a very sexy pirate. Think Kate Beckinsale in Van Helsing but sexier.

Adjusting the corset, she grinned before she clicked her fingers again and vanished in a cloud of glitter.

A trip to the pub first, and then she would visit the family and maybe have a look at those hatchlings... maybe even adopt one... or two... nooooo... maybe an army.

Dave felt bad for dropping Jessica into the ocean, but he was happy to see Maeve and Will, and he hadn't felt this happy in a long time.

There was one reason for that, and she was sitting across from him drying her long hair on a towel.

As soon as he had fished her out, he had shifted back to human and got dressed, although the shift felt easier this time but that may have been because he had Jessica to focus on.

Nothing that could have made him happier, knowing Jessica liked his Kracken form had lit him up from the inside. Was he really the same Kracken that had never wanted to shift and wanted to leave the Hole? Yet now he couldn't even picture leaving his home.

"Jessica," he called her name before he scooted his big form closer and took her damp hand in his large one. "Sorry," he stated. His words were coming easier, but he still found them difficult, especially to say long sentences. He didn't want to waste words with Jessica, so he kept things simple.

"Sorry," he repeated and bowed his head.

An idea came to him and instead of questioning himself or overthinking it, he acted.

Slowly, so not to startle her, he raised her palm and placed a kiss on the meaty part,

right below her thumb.

He had seen Will do it with Maeve and knew it was a kiss.

But he wasn't sure how Jessica would react to it.

Yes, she liked his Kracken form, but that didn't necessarily mean she liked him.

As his lips touched her flesh, Dave couldn't help but sweep a tongue out to lick her skin, tasting the salt from the sea water but also the essence of her very skin.

She tasted of salt, summertime, and sunshine. For humans, that probably would sound totally absurd but for a Kracken that lived at Merlin's Gate, that was nothing. Dave regularly tasted colours.

"Dave," she whispered. Her free hand held the towel on her lap as she looked at him, her eyes pulled together in a frown.

Dropping her hand, he sat back and bowed his head. "Sorry," he repeated, but this time it was a sorry for kissing her. He didn't look up, didn't want to see the anger or disgust in her eyes.

He needed to talk to his brother, Dave had no idea how to court a human because that was what he wanted to do.

The connection he felt with her was confusing, but without talking to his brother, Brutus, he wasn't sure if that was because she was his mate or because he was a horny Kracken that had never had that experience.

Dave was about to stand up and leave when her hand on his stalled his movements. "Dave," she whispered again, and reached up to cup his cheek.

He lifted his eyes to hers and became instantly lost in their depths.

He didn't dare move, instead freezing as she moved closer to him. Her eyes flickered from his down to his lips and back again.

He licked them in response, he had never had a kiss before. Would she do it?

"Don't be sorry," she whispered before she placed her lips against his, a gentle press as her hand slid from his cheek to the back of his neck.

Dave made fists with his hands to stop from grabbing her. Slowly, she moved against him, her lips coaxing his in the time old tradition.

He jumped as she slid her tongue against the seam of his lips, silently begging for permission to enter. Dave had seen the guardians and their mates kiss; they were so open about their affections that Dave had been desperate to try it.

Now he was, and it was better than he had ever anticipated. Opening, he let her in, feeling her tongue slide against his own, and he couldn't hold back a groan. Dave sat still as Jessica climbed onto his lap, wrapping her arms around his neck so she could kiss him harder.

"Hold me, Dave," she murmured against his mouth.

Dave didn't hesitate, he wrapped his arms around her and tugged her into his body harder, never letting her lips leave his own.

He was always told he was a quick learner, and he hoped that put him in good stead now.

His hands roamed up and down her back, getting used to the feel of her in his arms as

she moved, standing quickly only to sit back down and wrap not just her arms but also her legs around him.

This new position put her right against his human tentacle.

He groaned loudly at the contact and felt it grow hard.

His body reacted to her touch in a way it had never done before.

Dave knew what was happening, he had seen his brother and his mate come together in very much the same way, but he had never understood it until now.

She was a need for him, one that he couldn't get enough of.

He didn't want to stop kissing her because she tasted so good, but he also wanted to lick every inch of her skin and see if she tasted the same everywhere.

She groaned in his arms, groaned his name like it was a plea to the goddess. For that noise alone, Dave would destroy anything she wanted him to. Fetch her whatever treasure she wished for from the bottom of the sea.

His body demanded something but he wasn't sure what, it was on edge, and he couldn't help but flex his hips a little, pressing his tentacle against Jessica's body.

The friction felt out of this world, and he did it again, only this time Jessica cried out.

He stopped, afraid he had hurt her, only to find her grinding down on him herself.

"Oh my god," she cried out against his lips.

Pulling back, he waited for her eyes to meet his own.

“Jessica?” he questioned, hoping she would understand. Understand that he had never done this before.

Their laboured breaths mingled as they stared at one another, bright green eyes meeting emerald ones before Jessica spoke.

“I got you,” she whispered and pulled back. Slowly crawling off his lap she took his hand. With slow steps she walked them back into the nursery cavern, and to the small sleeping area Dave had created for her. Once inside she released his hand and pulled the curtain, so they had privacy.

Dave’s heart raced as he looked at the little human who, in mere moments, had taken control of his heart and possibly his soul as well.

He knew Krackens mated for life, but he never expected to fall this hard and this quickly, and as she stepped forward and slowly caressed his covered chest, he was grateful for it.

“Show me,” he murmured; his voice deepened with emotion. He wanted to learn it all and he wanted to learn it all with Jessica.

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

“Has anyone seen the damn pirates?” Bas called out as the familiars met on the hill that overlooked Kracken’s Hole. “Anyone.”

“How the FUCK TWAT BALLS did five pirates vanish when their boat is still anchored?” Binky asked, ruffling his feathers.

Their search had come up empty, no pirates. As in no new pirates. The old were still lolling around and getting pissed, and Blackbeard was still naked despite the fact there were new rules out, stating that they should be covered at all times.

“Has anyone actually checked the boat?” Edith piped up; she was currently lying on her back in the long grass, blowing smoke rings from her nose.

Silence reigned.

Then Bas swore... again...

“You have got to be fucking kidding me, the one place that’s so obvious and no one actually checked it.”

“I mean, we assumed they wouldn’t be in there as it’s too obvious,” Grundlepus piped up, finally giving everyone else the attention instead of licking his balls.

“We are so letting the side down,” Binky stated, pushing his glasses back up onto his face.

“How are we supposed to protect when we can’t even locate the problem in this tiny

town? It's not as if there are loads of places to hide, there's only one way out." Bas started to pace, his tail doubling in size and only getting bigger the more he paced.

"So, what do we do?" Grundlepus asked, and everyone groaned.

"Really?" Bas asked.

"Oh, my goddess," Edith snorted from the grass.

"Baba's Balls," Binky added.

"YOU'RE FUCKED," was all Denzel contributed towards the conversation.

Bruce actually liked the little town of Kracken's Hole and, in any other circumstances, it would have made a nice place to live. Well, apart from the ghosts and the threat of Krackens and... magic.

They had taken this chance to better their lives, but the witch they had dealt with had not been a very good one. But still, there were here and they were about to take control of their own destiny. In a few hours, they would leave with their bounty.

Bruce was not sure what they would do with said bounty when they had it, but apparently the witch would know.

Their plan had been worked out to perfection.

As soon as night fell, they would sneak in, do their grab, and then leave.

The boat was ready to set sail at moment's notice and the crew were ready.

The witch had also given them a few positions that would help.

They did have Krackens to deal with, after all, and they were nasty bastards if legend got it right.

Bruce shuddered; the idea of tentacles actually went through him. It was those little suction cups that made him shiver at the mere thought of them being attached to his skin.

“Nasty.”

“What’s nasty, captain?”

“Tentacles.”

“Ahh yeah, they don’t taste nice on their own, but with a bit of seasoning they can be lovely.” The answer caught Bruce off guard.

“What?”

“Yeah, saw it on a TV show once, how to cook the perfect tentacle.”

“Is that right?”

“Oh yes, they also did a marvellous avocado salad with it as well, looked delicious.”

Bruce blinked. “Is everything ready?” They changed the subject, if the idea of touching a tentacle made them shiver more than the thought of eating brought back the nausea. Their up-chuck reflex would be exercised with vigour.

“Yes, captain, all that’s left is to grab the bounty, a room has been prepared.”

“Perfect, let us wait for nightfall and then we strike.”

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Jessica felt the nerves in Dave's body as he held himself still for her. She understood that this would be new to him. Maeve had admitted as much in a conversation they had about how new Dave was to being a shifter.

Never in her wildest thoughts and dreams did she ever think she would be showing someone how to kiss, how to touch, and how to receive pleasure. But here she was, her hand on a giant chesticle, ready to get down and do the wild thing with a literal Kracken.

She wasn't usually the kind of girl that slept with a guy on a first date, she was usually extremely picky about the guys she went for. She avoided warlocks, vampires and sirens. Preferring to stick with humans who were fully aware they were just scratching an itch for each other.

But Dave, well he was different. Apart from the obvious, that was. Dave had such a pure soul she could see it in the actions he took and in his eyes. She had felt something for him that moment he had walked into the dining room in the Hollow.

Yes, he was devastatingly handsome, but it was his kindness that drew her in.

The way he dealt with the hatchlings all night with her, and when he showed her his Kracken form.

She never knew she could get the instant feels for someone, yet here she was, and she was about to take it to the next level.

Sliding her hand down his chest, she reached the hem of his T-shirt. Lifting it she

revealed inch after inch of that wickedly erotic muscled torso and, finally, gave herself permission to do what she had wanted to do since he had stripped off earlier.

She licked him.

Yes, Jessica licked a long trail up the centre of his abs and into the centre of his chest. Dave tasted of the sea, fresh and salty but with a hint of something else she couldn't put her finger on.

It took some effort and the help of a rock, but she managed to lift his T-shirt off him, leaving him standing in just his jeans.

His hair was perfectly tousled, and his eyes had darkened, the green now more emerald, like her own, as he watched her.

"Dave," she murmured. "Kiss me?" she asked and lifted her chin.

Instead of bending his tall frame to meet hers, he picked her up with one arm around her waist and lifted before he sealed his lips over hers and took her mouth.

She may have had to show the way before, but Dave was a quick learner.

Taking full control of the kiss he made her see stars.

He dominated her mouth, sliding his tongue against hers.

The man kissed like he had been born to it and that made her groan.

Her body started to ignite, every sense heightened, and her core tightened in response.

No male had ever made her feel this hot or wet from merely a kiss, Jessica was

convinced that she would combust on the spot before she even took his jeans off.

“Tell me,” he growled out. “What. To. Do.”

Jessica had to pull back from the kiss, placing her hands on his shoulders to try and clam herself.

“Take my T-shirt off,” she breathed out, she would take this slow with him, teach him everything she knew. Jessica also wanted to make this last, prolong the pleasure they would most certainly get.

Dave gently placed her feet on the floor and slowly slid his hand up her waist, taking the material with it. She loved the feel of his hand on her bare skin, his palm slightly roughed and enough to elicit goosebumps across her skin.

Once her T-shirt was off, she threw it to the rock she had been standing on and let Dave look. Of course, like a typical male, his gaze was fixed upon her breasts.

“Breast man, I see,” she chuckled and reached around, unclasping her bra in seconds and letting that join the T-shirt on the ground.

She watched as Dave’s eyes widened before he stepped forward and lifted a hand.

Seconds before she anticipated his touch, he looked up at her on the rock.

Jessica nodded, giving him the permission he sought to touch.

And didn’t that just give her the warm and fuizzies.

His large palm covered her breast, he squeezed gently before he caressed it, getting used to the feel and weight, and Jessica loved every second.

He was not only learning her body, but he was showing her what he liked again.

She loved it when he squeezed, but wanted more of the light touches that skated across her skin.

His fingertips soon found her nipple, and she watched as Dave discovered that if he blew his breath over the pink flesh, it went hard and then he could tweak it gently. Jessica was panting now; she had never reacted like this from a mere tweak and pull, but she was ready to fall over that edge.

“Oh goddess,” she breathed, and Dave grinned in response.

“Good?” he asked as he kept going.

“Oh yes,” she croaked out as his head bent and he flicked the tip with his tongue. Her cry became muffled as she put her fist into her mouth, not wanting to disturb the hatchlings.

Dave pulled away and smiled up at her, his hands still touching her skin like he couldn't stop himself from touching her.

“More,” he said simply, and Jessica could do little but nod. Taking a deep breath, she swallowed, knowing full well this was about to go from 0-60 very fast.

Her only issue was... could she handle it? Could she handle him?

“Take your jeans off,” she practically panted, and as he made quick work of it, she slid her own down her legs, leaving her in just her knickers.

Before when she had seen Dave, he was soft, yet still impressive. Now... holy shit, he was huge. Jessica eyed him and swallowed once again; her pussy clenched in

need, but her body was not sure that she was ready for this.

Dave stepped forward and cupped her face, his eyes searching hers, he was worried about her and that relaxed her. He was no gigolo that was going to take her with no feeling. No, this was Dave.

Her Kracken.

Yes, he was hers as much as she was his.

“Help me down,” she asked, and Dave picked her up so he could slide her down his body until her feet hit the floor.

Slowly she touched him again, her hands stroking his chest, a chest she could not get enough of before she slid her hand lower until she had his large cock in her hand.

His groan of pleasure fed her own need, made her pussy pulse.

She was wet, there was no question about that, but was she wet enough.

Sliding her hand up and down, Jessica found Dave’s cock had small ridges on the underside.

Circular ridges that resembled suction cups, and with each pass of her hand they became more pronounced.

Jessica gasped as they moved against her hand, the cups starting to suction slightly, not painful but adding to the sensation and heightening it.

Instead of standing passive, Dave’s own hands began their own path of exploration.

He started at her breasts, getting his fill of her globes before he ventured lower, seemingly awed over every aspect.

Her navel and her belly button intrigued him immensely, before he travelled lower and discovered her clit and the entrance to her pussy.

He groaned when he found her soaked, her juices covering his hand.

“Good?” he enquired, and Jessica nodded.

“Yes, very good.”

He parted her folds with his thick fingers, watching her face with every touch. Learning with every gasp, groan, or wince what she liked.

Dave was a fast learner, and within ten minutes of discovering her clit Jessica was in the throes of one of the best orgasms of her life.

He played her body like it was a musical instrument, all the while she gripped his cock as if it was a lifeline...

the only thing keeping her afloat. As she cried out her pleasure, Dave sealed his lips over her own and took them like he was going to take her body. Hard, deep, and fast.

Slowly, she felt his fingers move from her clit, replaced by his large thumb, and he slid them into her pussy. She clenched on the digits, wanting to hold them in place. Dave groaned with her as she tightened her grip on him.

“Oh goddess,” she cried out. “Dave, oh my god.”

Instead of stopping he doubled down. Using his free arm he picked her up without

removing his hand. Somehow, Jessica was not sure how he managed to get them to the camp bed and lay them both down.

Their bodies were a mess of limbs, and their panting filled the small cave.

Gods, if this was Dave learning then Jessica may have bitten off more than she could handle.

She released her vice-like grip from around his cock and gently removed his hand from her pussy, Her body was sensitive, and not in the don't touch me kind of way, but in the I'm going to need more of that kind of way.

Pushing Dave onto his back, she kissed him with a passion she had never felt before, letting his hands roam her back as she slowly straddled him.

Lifting up, she placed her hands on his chest and smiled. "Good, are you okay?"

He nodded; his lips lifted slightly in a smirk.

"Ready?" she said, and he nodded again, his eyes almost closing as grasped his length and place it at her entrance.

Teasing her own clit at the same time, Jessica lowered herself slowly onto Dave's might Kracken cock.

Each inch made her feel fuller than the last, and each inch made Dave groan, giving her the will to keep going.

Her body was on fire, her pussy so wet that, surprisingly, she slid onto him as if he had been made for her.

Jessica cried out and she sat fully on her Kracken and when she looked down into his green eyes, she saw love and a hell of a lot of lust. Jessica had mere seconds to adjust before Dave gripped her hips and grinned.

“Oh shit,” Jessica breathed out as all hell broke loose and Dave showed her exactly what a fast learner he was.

Page 17

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Jessica was thigh-deep in one of the nursery pools dealing with a very clingy hatchling. She was a little bit distracted. Who could blame her? Dave had literally rocked her world, and she was now dealing with the aftereffects. Her body was beautifully sore and yet she was also craving more.

Dave was a fantastic lover, who not only gave her the most pleasure she had ever been given, but he was caring too. He made sure he never hurt her despite his size, he made sure she was satisfied. Oh boy was she satisfied. Her cheeks heated at the thought.

“Come on now, off you go into the pool,” she cooed to the hatchling, smiling as it gave her arm a little squeeze before detaching itself to go and swim.

Jessica had been cataloguing each hatchling so they could identify each one and do a growth chart.

This was the first time anyone had the chance to monitor the growth of a Kracken from a hatchling, so she was determined to do it properly.

Each one was weighed and measured, and any markings noted down.

To start with, they had given each one a number.

They would name them but, for now, a number was easier.

Each hatchling was a blessing and Jessica felt so very honoured to be present and able to help. The work she had done with both the selkies and sea monsters helped

immensely, and each hatchling was now thriving, although maybe a little chaotic.

As focused as she was on the task at hand, every now and again she would find herself searching for Dave, she couldn't help it. But usually when she looked up to find him, she found him staring straight back at her with a smile on his face.

A whistle had her looking up to see Maeve, Arietta, and Isabeau standing by the entrance smiling.

She had already been made aware that they had come down earlier in the day and had played with the hatchlings.

Luckily they had finished playing with the hatchlings and then left so they had not be privy to a private showing of cleaning the cobwebs from the old womb broom.

They seemed just as obsessed as she was over them.

Careful not to step on any, she waded through the pool towards the edge.

"Ladies, welcome to my crib. As you can see this is where the magic happens." She grinned and all three laughed.

"Yeah, about that magic..." Arietta grinned. "We heard it can be noisy."

"Maybe scream-worthy, perhaps." Isabeau waggled her eyebrows, and Jessica felt her cheeks burn.

"Oh, you didn't, did you?" Jessica asked, all of a sudden feeling embarrassed.

"Well, we didn't, but you've just confirmed it." Maeve laughed and patted her on the shoulder. "I kind of got the feeling that you two liked each other and I must say,

quick work there, honey.”

“Oh, now I sound like a slapper,” Jessica groaned.

“Nah, it’s the males here at Kracken’s Hole, there’s something about them that put your knickers in a twist. To be honest, I think mine are still twisted, that male drives me nuts,” Isabeau admitted.

“Not complaining though.” She sat next to Jessica and nudged her with her shoulder.

“Once you’ve had Kracken there’s no going back, hey. ”

All the girls laughed at that and Jessica wholeheartedly agreed.

“When you put it like that, nope, there is no going back. I can honestly say Dave is a VERY fast learner.” She grinned.

“Oh, come here, you little cutie.” Isabeau reached over and pulled a hatchling on to her lap.

“I swear, they cuter every single time I see them.” Arietta giggled as she leant over the pool to play with another.

“Hun, you’ve been down here twice.”

“Yeah, and they’ve gotten cuter.”

Jessica met Maeve’s gaze and they both smiled.

As much as Jessica loved her home, Kracken’s Hole was already feeling more like home than anywhere else.

She felt she could be herself and not have to worry that she wasn't a proper witch.

She could be as nerdy as she needed and the girls would never judge her, they just accepted her for who she was.

"Hey, have you guys seen Edith? I've not seen her for a while," Jessica asked as she climbed out of the pool.

"I hate to break it to you, hun, she's now part of the clan, she is now a member of the FAT."

"The what now?"

"The Familiars Association Trust, basically the little sods bugger off to the pub and have meetings." Maeve did the air quotes when she said meetings. "They get pissed and talk shit, that's about it."

"Oh." Jessica shrugged her shoulders. "It will do Edith some good, get her out a bit more."

"Right, get yourself dry and presentable, we are all going to the pub tonight. Quiz night and Maureen has put some beers behind the bar for us." Isabeau stood and wiped her wet hands-on Arietta's top.

"Oi."

"Shush."

Maeve simply rolled her eyes and smiled. "Jessica, your presence is expected."

"I wouldn't miss it, but I still have four more to note down and then I am all yours."

She grinned.

“Perfect, I will mention it to Dave, and we will meet you at the pub then, you know where to go, right?”

“Oh yes I will be there as soon as these little cutie pies will let me.” Jessica grinned again with excitement.

She couldn't help it; everything was coming together.

In a matter of a days, she had found somewhere she belonged and someone to belong to.

The girls all skipped off to get ready and Jessica went to work.

Luckily, with the sun going down, the hatchlings were getting ready to sleep so they were not as active, making life a hell of a lot easier.

It only took her another hour to get finished. Jessica loved the peace of the cavern, the small, cute sounds of each of the hatchlings and the gentle sound of the sea from outside. As she climbed out of the pool, she wiped her hands on her jeans and made to move to her little cave.

The hairs on the back of her neck went up as strange shadows moved across the cave.

“Hello, anyone there?” she called out, her voice echoing off the walls. The hatchlings stirred but not enough to wake.

“Dave, is that you?” she asked again when movement sounded from the entrance to the cove. It must be Dave; he was the only one that came and went from that direction.

Stepping out on to the sand, Jessica was distracted by the way the moon bathed the shore, the gentle lap of the waves shone and glistened within its pale light. It was then that she saw a ship, a small ship, but one that should not have been there.

“What the...” Her sentence went unfinished as unconsciousness took her, sending her to the sand in seconds. The shadows were quick, collecting her and taking her quickly to the boat as if she was never there.

Page 18

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

The pub was busy, as was the norm on quiz night, Maureen always put one hell of a spread on, and the cider was always good.

This had been the first time Dave had attended and it was heartwarming to be included.

Everyone was there, even the familiars. The only person not there yet was Jessica, she was still with the hatchlings.

Dave had meant to go back but he had gotten waylaid and was told she would meet him when she was finished.

He looked forward to seeing her again, even though they had been working side by side he couldn't wait to sit next to her and hold her hand.

What they had shared in the cave had been nothing short of amazing for him, he never knew it could be that intense and he now knew the true purpose of his tentacle.

Brutas held up his pint in salute as they shared a knowing smile with each other.

His brother had tried to tell him and he hadn't wanted to listen, but it was meant to be. He had been wondering how he was going to find his mate, and she was the one that found him. Dave would be forever grateful for that.

Catching Maeve's gaze from where she sat on her mate's lap, he didn't like seeing her frown. She looked at her wrist again before shaking her head at Dave.

Jessica was late, really late.

“Evening, everyone, here’s your platter. Make sure you eat it all, I’ve got more where that came from.” Maureen placed a large tray on the table. The contents ranged from scotch eggs, sausage rolls, all the way to mini pizzas.

“Aww, Maureen, you made us a picky tea.” Arietta laughed and reached for a pizza.

“Only the best for my girls, speaking of girls, where’s the new one?” Maureen asked, but before anyone could answer she turned and shouted, “Edward, I swear if you don’t put some clothes on right this second, I will cut it off.”

“Pirates, even ones as famous as Blackbeard, have to adhere to rules,” Will said with a chuckle.

“Just don’t you start prancing around here naked, my love, ‘cause I can do worse things than chopping it off.” Maeve grinned before she placed a kiss on his cheek.

Dave smiled but then remembered what Maureen had said. Jessica was indeed late, very late.

“Jessica,” he stated simply, and Maeve nodded.

“I know, she shouldn’t be this late, she said she only had four left to do.” Maeve looked up to see the familiars all leaning over their little balcony. Maureen had seen to it that they had their own little area to sit and drink.

“Err, Maeve?”

“What, Binky? What haven’t you told me?” Maeve groaned.

“Well, Denzel told us there were some pirates here that wanted to steal something.”

“Binky, the whole town is filled with pirates, and yeah, they steal shit. It’s what they do,” Isabeau pointed out. “It’s also what Bas does too.”

“Hey,” he called out, but one look from his witch shut him up.

“No, Denzel said these were normal pirates, as in... alive,” Grundlepus confirmed.

“We’ve tried to track them down, but we couldn’t find them and when we went to search their boat they had gone,” Bas admitted.

“And?” Maeve said.

“We think they went after the eggs.”

Dave was out of his seat in seconds. “Jessica,” was all he said. It was all he had to say, she was the one with the eggs and if they went after those, she would not let them be taken without a fight. She would protect them with her life.

“FOR FUCK SAKE, BINKY,” Maeve shouted before she turned on all of the familiars.

“What have we said about sharing important information with regards the safety of Kracken’s Hole?”

“We must always report to you guys,” they all repeated, except for Edith who sat quietly at the back, her face bent.

Dave went over, reached up onto the balcony, and plucked her off it.

The dragon had been crying so Dave didn't say anything.

Instead held her against his chest and left the pub.

If Jessica had been hurt, he would rip apart anything and everything to find her.

And woe betide the creature that got in his way.

Page 19

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Dave almost ran to the cave and called out Jessica's name repeatedly.

He had stopped carrying Edith as soon as they had entered the Hollow, she had gone off to search their rooms as Dave had run down to the nursery pool.

Only there was no sign of her. Nothing, except her notebook dropped in the sand at the cove.

It was then Dave saw it, the tell-tale sign of a boat that had landed upon the sands, in the very place he himself would lay his bulk in Kracken form.

His heart felt like it was about to stop, and the pain of being separated from Jessica tore through his very soul. Tilting his head back, Dave released a roar that would have never been possible from a human throat. The sound carried, filling the entirety of Kracken's Hole and carried out to sea.

Dave was desperate to jump into the ocean and find her, but it wasn't just him anymore.

If he had learned anything over the last few days, it was that they were family at the Hollow and they would work together, and this would be no different.

Turning, he found his family there waiting, there were no looks of sadness. Only determination.

Dave nodded at them all in thanks and pointed out to sea. "Jessica," he said, and they nodded back. He watched at the girls clasped each other's hands and bent their heads.

As one they chanted.

“Darkness of night. Moon as bright. Our sister is far from our sight. Lend her our strength. Lend her our hearts. We hate to be apart. Reveal those who have done wrong. With magic in our song. So let it be so mote it be.”

Dave watched as a ripple of magic left the cousins, rippling out over the sea.

“Go get her, Dave, we will look after the hatchlings, bring her home,” Maeve encouraged.

Dave didn’t need to be told twice. He ran straight for the sea, ignoring the rip of his clothing as he dived in and shifted, his bulk slicing through the water as he swam.

Whoever had taken his mate had made one fatal mistake...

You don’t mess with a Kracken.

Bruce laughed as The Girthy Cock-Ral moved out to sea, they had managed to get their stolen bounty and had gotten an extra as well, not only that but they had gotten away Scott free.

“We did it, captain, we did it.”

“What if they come after us?”

“They won’t.”

“How do you know?”

“Because they won’t, I know these things.”

A groan followed that statement as their captive woke, they'd had to resort to good old fashioned brute force when it came to subduing the woman.

A quick bonk to the head had done it, but it had been getting her onto the ship that was the biggest task.

None of them seemed to have the strength needed.

"Ahh, she is awake," the captain said and stepped forward, holding their sword at the woman's neck.

"You will behave yourself or I will be forced to cause harm," they announced as the crew stood on the deck. Petunia, one of the four pirates, placed their hand inside one of the barrels and pulled out one of the hatchlings.

"If you do not behave, I will hurt the creature."

"Don't you fucking dare," the woman screeched as she stood and moved towards the barrel, despite the sword to her neck.

"Whoaaaaaaa, I have the power here, lady, I suggest you calm down," Bruce stated, pleased to see her calm quickly and sit back down. Her neck, unfortunately, had been cut slightly and was now bleeding.

"Pansy, get a cloth, she has nicked her neck," Bruce ordered. "You will be a good girl, and we may let you go after the creature has been delivered." Bruce felt confident and yet the smirk on the woman's face did not sit well.

"Do you realise who you have stolen from and where you have stolen from?" Her voice held a hint of amusement. Still, Bruce kept quiet, they didn't want her to know that they maybe hadn't done full research.

“You complete muppets, you’ve not only stolen from Kracken’s Hole, a place protected by magic where three insanely powerful witches watch over it.

And when I say they will be pissed, I mean they will be mega pissed, especially as those creatures as you call them are pretty much their babies.

” The woman paused. “But you have also pissed off the protectors of Kracken’s Hole, who also happen to be that creature’s big brother and my mate. ”

The crew members moved about nervously and Bruce tried not to react to her words.

“Are you honestly that stupid you thought you would get away with it?”

As the woman made her statement, a wave of what felt like wind ripped across the deck of the ship, it brought with it the smell of cinnamon and lavender. Bruce felt their whole body start to tingle.

“Captain, what is happening to us?” one of their crew members called out.

“Captain, help!” another screamed.

Bruce felt their body change in reaction to whatever that ripple had been. The woman had been right. They had no idea what they were up against... and they had lost.

Jessica stood on the deck in disbelief. From the moment she had awoken on the ship’s deck she had only one plan in mind, and that was to get back to Kracken’s Hole at all costs. But when they had pulled a hatchling from the barrel, she had seen red.

She hated to see the capture of something so young and pure, and she would happily take on a deck full of pirates for the little one.

Its cry had broken her heart, making her want to rip out the heart of the captain who had thought it a great idea to raid and steal not just from Kracken's Hole, but from the Hollow and Krackens themselves.

Jessica had never been scared for herself; she knew that as soon as Dave had found out that she was gone, he would come for her.

It had been his roar from the town that had brought her out from being unconscious.

She had felt the magic as it had been released but what had happened, she was not prepared for.

How could she be?

You couldn't write this shit.

After the magic had hit, all the members of the crew had been affected. The spell had reduced them to what they truly were. Reaching down, Jessica picked one up by its neck.

"You have got to be kidding me; I was kidnapped by five fucking chickens." Shaking the one that had been the captain, she growled in its face.

"You kidnapped me and a hatchling for what profit? I should throw you overboard and see if chickens can swim." Instead she dropped the chicken and watched it scuttle off the beach with the others.

"We will be having words when we get back to Kracken's Hole," she shouted as she walked to the barrel and pulled out the hatchling, letting it hold onto her with a vice-like grip. "Shhh, it's okay, they won't hurt you," she cooed.

Then felt and heard it; the groan of the ship as something big took hold of it. Like a scene from a very famous pirate movie, tentacles swept up and over the vessel. Engulfing it until a face appeared above the railing.

Only Jessica was far from scared. Unfortunately, the same could not be said for the chickens. She had never seen one faint before, she had now seen five do it, and in sync too.

“Hey, honey,” she called out and walked to the rail. She placed her hand on Dave’s head and kissed his Kracken nose. “Thank you for coming to rescue me.”

The grumble he released made the whole boat vibrate, and it only grew deeper when he spotted the cut on her neck. Tentacles shot over the railing ready to flatten the chickens where they fell.

“Don’t do that, we need to take them back to the Hollow to be interrogated,” she admitted before she looked at him and smiled.

“Dave, will you take us home?”

Page 20

Source Creation Date: July 24, 2025, 9:54 am

Dave made quick work of making it back home with the ship in tow.

The chickens had been taken into custody and placed in a prison-like cell.

Apparently, Maeve had decided the Hollow needed a jail.

The girls would interrogate the chickens to find out who sent them, and whether retaliation was needed.

All Dave needed was his mate.

The little hatchling had no injuries and was returned to the pool, although Dave was positive Jessica had named that one already, seeing as it was as attached to her as he was, and he couldn't blame it.

She was the light in the dark for him, she completed his life in ways he never thought possible.

He had thought his life was a mess and shambles when he had first been given the power to shift.

Only now, he saw that it wasn't a curse but a gift.

A gift that made it so he could find his mate.

“Dave, are you ready?”

Dave turned and couldn't speak, his mate stood waiting for him, naked.

“Jessica,” he breathed out, and yet before he could say anything more, she bolted for the cove. Dave laughed. The sound filled the cavern before he gave chase. He would follow her anywhere.

It was, after all, his Kracken Job.

The Familiars.

“We would like to formally invite you, Edith, Purple dragon, to join FAT, do you accept this honour?” Binky stated, doing really well not to swear.

“Really, we are doing this?” Edith asked and folded her arms; a tiny bit of smoke left her right nostril.

“Do you TWAT accept?” Binky asked again. The other familiars were standing in a semi-circle all looking serious.

Edith rolled her eyes then sighed. The sigh was a sign of giving in and going along with the charade in front of her.

“Yes, I accept.”

“Welcome to FAT,” the familiars all chimed in and moved to hug her.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

“Hugs,” Grundlepus said sadly. “We always hug.”

“Nope.”

“But...”

“Nope, nope, and fuck nope.”

“Fine... your round then.”

“Dammit,” Edith grumbled and headed for the bar. She had been worried she would lose her family when, in fact, she gained more.

“So, what’s the plan for tonight, Binky?” Bas asked as they waited for their pints.

“World domination,” Binky grinned, and they all laughed.

Their laughter was witnessed by none other than a sexy pirate in the corner, who met Edith’s gaze and raised her glass. Yes, Kracken’s Hole was more than just a home now, it was a way of life. Only hers was about to change. No one knew Edith’s secret, not even Jessica.

The door to the pub opened and in walked two strangers, hoods covering their faces, and they headed straight for the bar. Right below Edith’s viewpoint.

As their hoods lowered, Edith caught sight of them in the mirror over the back of the bar.

“Shit,” she whispered and pushed back from the edge of the balcony.

Kracken’s Hole was supposed to be her safe space... or was it just the start of a new adventure?

Next up in the Krackens of Kracken’s Hole series:

Stop Kracken About