

# Magical

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*A short piece I did for the [Drow Drabbles LiveJournal Community](#), on one of the prompts - which is also the title. ;)*

*Who is An'yn Tenar'ai, and just how did her House rise so fast? And*

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# 1 - Magical - Oneshot

House Tenar'ai had risen from nowhere, it seemed. In barely the blink of a Priestess's eye, it had gone from being a nondescript minor house in a dank, dirty corner of Menzoberranzan to snapping at the heels of the twelfth house with a fervour not seen for many centuries now.

Rumours abounded. That the Spider Queen had taken them into her special favour, that every boy-child was sacrificed to her, that every male consort met his end in her spindly clutches once a child was born to the Matron, to the idea that the Matron Mother was a consort of Lloth herself. There was no theory too strange, it seemed, to stop the rumours passing from the lips of one fearful Drow noble to another.

Eldest daughter Priestess An'yn did nothing to discourage the rumours. With a soft smirk on her lips, she glided through the crowds in the market districts, two female soldiers in matching blue and red livery flanking her. The occasional scornful gaze came her way from the nobles of the highest ranking houses, but for the most part the slender, dark skinned denizens, male and female alike, slunk away from her as if her very presence could taint them and steal their lives.

How very little they knew, she exulted as a male of a lower ranking house scuttled out of her way, stopping only when he was a good distance from the tall, elegant female and, despite feigning nonchalance now he was out of her reach, giving her a way look from beneath long white eyelashes.

She paused, her head turning slowly to meet the crimson gaze of the male. He looked away immediately, but An'yn's eyes burned into his cheek until he apprehensively met her gaze again. "You. Come here." Her ice cold voice could have put a glacier to shame.

His reluctance evident in every step he took, the male approached the Priestess, not daring to refuse a direct order from a female of a higher ranking house – if, indeed, he had the courage to refuse a female at all. An'yn could see from his expression that he was no Elderboy, or even Secondboy: the male had the look of a creature regularly trodden upon by those who sought to rise higher in the familial ranks. He had probably only survived this long because he didn't look as though he could have beaten a sheet of parchment in a fight weighed in his favour, she surmised as she looked him up and down, a sneer marring her full lips. After a few moments cowering beneath her imperious gaze, the male murmured, "was there something you wanted, Priestess?" His eyes flicked to the whip at her waist, and he licked his lips uneasily.

An'yn ignored the fact he had spoken out of turn. "Yes. You will accompany me." She turned on her heel and stalked away.

The young male didn't know what to make of the situation, but when the Priestess turned and impatiently gestured for him to follow her, realised he had no escape. If he was to turn and run now, she would exact terrible revenge upon him – he had no wish to die so soon.

They had walked for a good ten minutes before the male dared to venture, "where are we going, Priestess?"

An'yn gestured to one of her entourage, and the male was slapped loudly across the face. Her only gratification was that the stupid boy had had the sense not to cry out. "You will not ask questions of someone so obviously your superior." This was a lot to ask, even for a subservient male, and she could only thank Lloth that he was so obviously downtrodden that, head lowered, he simply obeyed her order.

It was in silence that they approached the rough gouges in the rocky wall. They were by now no more than a few short meters away from one of the exits into the wilds of the Underdark, a fair distance away from the civilisation – if it could be termed that – of Menzoberranzan. With a single gesture An'yn stopped both her soldiers and the boy, who stood in silence as she murmured under her breath, the words of revealing that, bit by bit, showed the ornate entrance to her special chambers through the shredded and clawed rock. The doors swung open themselves, as if by magic, and without a word she led the three inside.

The door slammed heavily shut behind them, the sound reverberating around the dark chambers.

Here and there candles dotted the wall and a lantern hung from the middle of the ceiling, all already lit, making the young male squint in pain against the awful brightness. An'yn herself appeared to be unaffected, as did her entourage. The boy could only wonder at how she had trained herself to become inured to the painful light that these candles shed over the room.

Abruptly, An'yn raised her hand again and the warriors seized the boy's arms, lifting him easily from the ground and hauling him over towards a large, red-splattered block. He realised only then why she had chosen him: the least likely in the crowd to put up a fight. The thought flashed through his mind, *did she not know this was an act of war?!*, but even as the thought came, it was banished again. Of course it wasn't. There were no witnesses to his demise...

Trussed and strapped, the gagged male stared wide-eyed up at the diabolical Priestess from his position on the altar as she threw up her hands and began to chant. The lantern, dangling directly above the boy's head, began to sway wildly as some awful power engulfed the room, casting fearful highlights and shadows around the wall. Dotted on shelves he could see effigies of Drow figures, some with knives in, others with pins, stakes or miniature swords. On another wall a series of skulls were presented, and if he craned his head back far enough the rotting remains of male heads could be seen, all speared on long wooden stakes. His terrified gaze fell back to An'yn as she screamed the final part of her chant and a giant spectral spider appeared behind her, forelegs positioned protectively over both her shoulder.

"Another one..." The voice was cracked, female and harsh; the sound of it made his ears bleed as the words filtered into his brain. "An'yn, you are a credit."

To the male's horror, the spider shape moved forwards *through* the Priestess and hovered over him. As he stared, frozen with fear, the shape turned into the most beautiful Drow female he had ever seen, terrible and awesome. The mouth split into a smirk. Long fingered hands reached down to grasp his face.

A terrible, ear splitting shriek filled the cavern.

"*You fool!*" The unearthly female reared back from the boy as if burnt, her eyes burning more brightly

than he had ever seen before, as if the flames of hell themselves lived inside this horrifying woman. She spun around so abruptly it was dizzying and faced the cowering An'yn, advancing slowly upon her with hands outstretched, fingers clawlike. "*Not this one! I warned you!*"

The boy could see nothing more of his abductor, could hear nothing but the terrible piercing scream that overwhelmed him, mixing with the furious howl of the shadowy Drow woman, resonating in his head until he added his voice to the cacophony out of sheer pain, closing his eyes tightly because the colours that whirled around the chamber were too bright for him to stand.

When he came to his senses again, the chamber appeared empty. No Priestess An'yn, no soldiers; nothing but the grisly remains of the Priestess's treasure trove of Drow. His gag had vanished, but he remained trussed like an animal upon the altar. His head ached as though it had been hammered repeatedly.

"You are curious, yes?" The female voice came from a dark crevice, making the boy jump as though electrocuted.

He nodded, not daring to speak.

"She chose foolishly." This was spoken in a matter of fact tone, as if the previous events had been nothing more than a dream. "You, I trust, will not choose foolishly. I do not often shield *your* type." Obvious distaste coloured her words. "You, I am hoping, will be valuable to me at some point." She stepped forwards, still as transparent as when he first saw her and a wide smile across her full lips. The look lent a devastating, beautiful quality to her face. "...You had better not disappoint me." With those words, in front of his eyes, she simply vanished.

Tied to the altar, the male was left to ponder those cryptic words.