

~ Day 46 ~

In a dimly lit room, secluded beneath the Ruined City of the Agoge, Maldrak, could six figures be seen seated around a large and oval table. The atmosphere in the room was crushing, everybody sharing the same tense and stressful moods while also being monsters of immense power and strength who all ruled over a city of millions.

"We're running out of time! If we keep sitting here dawdling like goblins, we're simply asking for our own head to be presented on a platter..." - Alakra

The first to speak and break the suffocating silence was Warlord Alakra, an extremely strict and militant great orc. It was obvious to everybody, that even this usually orderly and ruthless orc was getting not only impatient but also worried at the unseen and impending doom hovering menacingly over their heads like a guillotine.

"Hmm- Yes... Although I loathe to agree with this... *old geezer*... if we don't act soon, we all die." - Medhin

This time it was Warlord Medhin that spoke, or as he liked to call himself; Lord Medhin the Great. Warlord Medhin was actually a mere orc, a whole tier lower than everybody gathered here, but his arrogance and way of speech indicated that he viewed any in his sight to be inferior to himself.

Warlord Medhin was a narcissist to the extreme, and the only reason that he could possibly act like this without finding himself dead and ditched in a gutter of the slums was due to his powerful magic. Although his body was extremely weak compared to everybody else, only sporting the usually mighty bodies of the orcs, his magic was deadly, able to conjure overwhelming flames.

"Bwahahaha, so the guy with his nose in the air so high he's barely able to look down on us finally deigns to speak to us '*lowly*' peers only when death looms over his own head - fufufu...." - Drokka

Laughing as he took a long swig of a gourd, no doubt filled with firebelly, Warlord Drokka caused everybody around to collectively give him a scowl, especially from Alakra who's piercing gaze burned with more annoyance and resentment than any other.

Warlord Drokka was a boisterous and lackadaisical great orc drunk, who always seemed to be able to pull alcohol from out of nowhere whenever he went dry. He essentially was the complete opposite of Warlord Alakra, and coincidentally also sported a fierce rivalry between the two, hence the heated stare he received.

"Now is not the time for jokes, you drunk!" - Alakra

"Oh, boys... no need for arguing." - Alya

Breaking the heated stares, was the seductive voice of Warlord Alya, a salacious great orc woman. As she spoke, she winked at both Alakra and Drokka, causing them to simultaneously involuntarily shiver with apprehension. To their great regret, they both have had intimate relations with the alluring warlord, as practically all of the other warlords had, female and male.

"So... Shade, have you finished your preparations?" - Alya

Emerging from the darkness of the room, a tall and slender woman appeared on a seventh seat, as if she had always been there. This was Warlord Shade, a stealthy great orc woman.

"No, Gellik still hasn't gotten me the dagger." - Shade

Hearing this, everybody gathered collectively looked over to the overly fat and large gremlin that embarrassedly scratched the back of his head. Actually, Gellik wasn't a gremlin but a creature called a Grendor. They simply just looked like overgrown and fat gremlins, and in truth really didn't change much from their gremlin counterparts.

"Well... the merchant from Ebongrave hadn't actually brought the item with him you see... Instead, he personally visited, and after confirming that we had the assets to purchase it, he sent a caravan back to fetch it..." - Gellik

Looking shyly at all the piercing gazes directed at him, Warlord Gellik's voice became lower due to the anxiety he got from six deadly and trigger-happy.

"They should be first back in five or six moons..." - Gellik

"Then what the hell are we supposed to do?! Using Mor's chosen fighter to hinder that weird monster of hers had already failed, and in just two days after the champion candidacy battles finish, she will have her three champions. Then nothing stops her from challenging the king's seat!" - Alakra

What Warlord Alakra was referring to was the fact that once Warlord Umbra, also known as the Mistress, acquired three champions, she would fill the requirement of challenging Maldrak, the city's king, for his position. When that happened, and she would undoubtedly win as she had those accursed and magically twisted champions, she would be the one to write the rules of the city.

Killing all the Warlords would surely be her first action as sovereign. The manic strive and need for power that could be gleaned in that insane woman's eyes was something that had been seen by all present. The only thing preventing her from already doing so, as her power as a 4th-tiered magic-wielding monster was stronger than everybody here combined, was the deterrent of the King, Maldrak.

He was the only thing keeping each of the warlords alive. While the King was no fool and also knew of her ambitions, and that his life would be forfeit once she bested his champions with her own, he didn't do anything to prevent it from happening. Maldrak was a kingly sovereign, and his pride ruled his actions.

The strict rules and guidelines he had set up for the city was something that he himself followed vehemently, preventing himself from taking action against Warlord Umbra. Altogether, the seven warlords and the King, they could definitely overpower the Mistress, but the King simply left everything to fate.

"You just have to take him out before the candidacy battles finish. She's holding an event in celebration tomorrow to garner support from the neutral parties of the city." - ???

Upon hearing this voice coming out from behind them, everybody looked over to spot a diminutive great orc girl. With chills running down their backs, they all recognized her.

The King's daughter, Melane.

She was born a true great orc, a fourth tier monster, and already wielded considerable power from just being of twelve years of age.

"You want us to walk into her domain, and blatantly kill her champion candidate? Will the King even tolerate that?" - Alakra

"Don't worry about Papa, he won't do anything as long as you all don't personally cause trouble in her domain. Shade, I believe you have a *certain* individual very much suited for the task, right?" - Melane

Shade simply nodded, upon hearing Melane's words.

"Great! - But, you better get hold of that dagger before long, as killing that candidate will not simply mean that she will sit back and take it. That dagger is the only opportunity of defeating that witch once and for all." - Melane

◁ Colonel Illesandre ▷

Marching down the wide and decked out corridor, I passed many messengers and assistants who were hurriedly making their way back and forth with stacks of reports and papers. But I spared them no second glance and they also wisely made way for me as the sheer

determination written all over my face caused obvious apprehension on the faces of everybody who stood in my path.

Practically kicking the door open, before the secretary sitting behind a desk could even voice a protest, I stormed into the large and spacious office. As the gruff-looking man sitting behind a rectangular desk stacked with papers of all kinds, was interrupted by the sudden clangor of notice and intrusion, he rose to bellow at the violation of order. But when he spotted me he could only dejectedly sigh and slump back into his chair, almost looking like he had just aged a decade in just a single moment.

"-Ugh, what is it, Colonel?" - Maxiam

Beaming at the obviously annoyed man, I simply adopted a devious grin.

"Uncle, I might've found some real dirt on the bitch." - Me

Frowning upon the break of rank and formality, the stocky and older man spoke again, also seemingly having decided to give up on protesting against his niece's lack of any manners and proper military etiquette.

"Who the hell - and what the hell are you talking about?" - Maxiam

"The black sheep of the Zephyrous Familia, it seems that she caused some trouble. This is an opportunity uncle! So I ask of you permission for me to take care of it." - Me

Scrutinizing me with a stern gaze, he asked.

"So... what is this 'trouble' you're talking about?" - Maxiam

This time I adopted a somewhat shy expression, not too much of a fan to disclose that I was actually grasping at straws here.

"-Umm, you see... I've gotten reports from a recent incident involving a small Frontier city, Saphren, and that bitch of a woman, Lily Zephyrous. From what I've investigated, the reports indicate that the incident had something to do with the spotting of a Sanguinite Queen and the subsequent excursion to put down the threat. But the reports are inconclusive, and there's a lot of holes in what exactly happened, plus the possible disappearance of the city's headguard stationed by Mordria's military itself." - Me

Slowly digesting this information, my uncle, Maxiam, seemed to ponder something.

"So, what exactly is it you want to do? The Zephyrous Familia is not to be trifled with, they aren't one of Mordria's five great families for nothing you know? Even though that girl is an outcast for being unable to wield the magic that the family is so famous for, we can't allow ourselves to offend them and cause more internal strife in the country than there already is." - Maxiam

Hearing my uncle's words, I adopted a feral grin like I've just gotten a bite on my hook, only now needing me to reel it in.

"Don't worry, I've already thought about it, and how it could potentially benefit the military as a whole! Due to her being an outcast, she had been relegated to that small and insignificant frontier as a mere guild master. But this gives us an opportunity. If we can catch her red-handed in whatever she might've done and/or is hiding, due to her being the responsibility of the guild as a guild master, they will demand reparations from the Zephyrous Familia, as that organization has no scruples when going against such a little entity compared to them." - Me

"So, I'm asking permission to send an investigative party to Saphren, Modria's Glades, and the outskirts of the Wastelands, the places where the incident had taken place. If they find any discrepancies that put her in a bad light or anything else of the sort crops up, I will send an incursion to take charge of assets and authority." - Me

This time, it was my uncle's turn to adopt a strikingly similar feral and devious grin, to that of my own.

"Bwahaha! Now you're finally thinking like how a real Ardent should. Yes... okay, I give you permission. But! - Only on the condition that you use the own family's resources and personal army, seeing as we can't justify our actions if anything goes wrong by using Modria's own resources and military instead of our own." - Maxiam

"Yes, Sir Justicar!" - Me

The obvious sarcasm that laced my voice combined with my overly exaggerated salute and militant tone caused the older man just scoff at my teasing before signaling me to take my leave.

◁ Deiden Archia ▷

Standing upon a balcony of a castle wreathed in pure nether stone stood I, the Promethean of Undeath. I looked over the lands of decrepit and desecrated earth, on which my hordes of undead minions crawled about. In the distance and in every direction, golems of flesh, towering homunculi, and sky-breaching pillars, beacons of death that spumed miasmatic clouds which tainted the azure-lit skies could be seen.

Admiring my numerous millennia of work, and the countless hardships that I've gone through to reach this far, I let a contented smile stretch out on my pale but immaculate face. As I felt the magical disturbance of a creature coalescing from the shadows themselves behind me, I didn't spare it even a glance, but simply spoke out.

"What is it?" - Me

My voice was smooth and inconspicuous, but at the same time, every word and syllable rang with power that shook the air, as if my voice was saturated in the very essence of magic.

"Master, the fluctuations in the leylines indicate that the apparition will soon appear on our plane and give fruit. Before long, The Seed of Life will be in the eyes of all the hegemon and creatures alike." - Xenith

Raising a slender eyebrow, I asked the creature of darkness residing within my shadow another question, this time my voice tinted with interest.

"-Oh? What about the entrance, have we found one yet?" - Me

"Yes, we have found one, and are currently securing it." - Xenith

Sensing some slight apprehension in the voice of my bonded servant, I queried as to what was bothering it.

"And?" - Me

"I'm sorry Master, but while we're not sure, it would appear that we aren't the only ones that have acquired an entrance. We believe the frost giants of the North might've also gained one, in their very own domain." - Xenith

Upon hearing this, I frowned slightly, but this simple action made the air and surrounding lands, many kilometers in each direction, tremble under an unseen pressure.

I did not like others eying my treasures...

*The Seed of Life will be **mine**.*