

WitchNun

Cherubim

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THE HUMMINGBIRD AND THE STORM

Deep into the hunting forest. Sei sits lonely by a creek. She's tired, and hungry. Her dark heavy hair flows over her shoulders, her calm pearly face shows just a glimpse of her dark ruby eyes.

"You'll give away my position" She says, motionless

"I fear whomever can see through your illusion sister"
Says Tya as she approaches from behind. Her braided white hair moves like a smoke trail following the embers of her eyes, a playful smile drawn on her tanned skin.

"You saw through it" Says Sei "And don't call me sister, we were just made in the same cauldron"

-Poff!- A piece of bread hits Sei on the head, she turns and looks at Tya.

"She's our mother" Says Tya seriously.

Sei turns away and looks at her own hands, her fingertips are dark and long like marble claws, her palms glisten like a pearl silk. "Is she?" She asks full of doubt.

"We are here and alive Sei, their love is to thank for that. Anyways, I'll leave, just wanted to say that I'm here for you, and that the barbarian girl across the creek will be here in a minute".

Sei blushes "Do you know her?" She asks surprised.

"The Vermin Peak" says Tya "We both helped a warlock party get out of there, but we had to take them to safety so I didn't spent too much time with her. She seems to have a kind hearth".

Sei again looks at her own hands "And how does she feel about...?".

"You'll find out" Says Tya as she kisses her temple "I love you, rest, we will find them".

A rustling noise comes from the brush far ahead, Sei gasps and quickly arranges her thick dark hair, she looks back to see Tya is gone and left a package wrapped in a

honey waxed cloth. She opens it to find it full of honey filled bread. This brings her a memory of being cradled by her mother. Sei looked very different then, not due to age, but because her skin was an onyx amber, and her eyes red. Two curled horns on her head. Her birth was more than a miracle, a battle, an elder soul brought to this realm.

“Pardon me” A kind voice announces its approach. “I am not one to bother, but I assumed me being able to reach you meant that some might be welcome” Says the young stoic girl, her long curly hair is red amber, her eyes a deep green.

Sei is shy, and a lone wolf, but manages to be gentle in her ways “I am just resting” She says “And the forest is everyone’s home”.

“Thank you” Says the girl, whose light armor and axe remind of a barbarian warrior “I’m Yar, and the smell of bread got me here” she says with a gentle smile.

“Oh, it is of no need for me” Says Sei as she hands the bag “You can take it to the city...” but her words are interrupted by the sound of her stomach, calling for a bite.

“Actually” Says Yar while she sits close by and parts a piece of bread to share with Sei. “I don’t sleep in the city because it’s full of those clueless adventurers. The nerve they

have to walk up to me to offer me a drink, or worse!" She jokes.

Sei smiles and shakes her head "Or worst..."

"What is it?" Asks Yar as she points far behind Sei. There is a floating essence that creates a wall around them, and further away behind it, you see a couple armed mercenaries walking by.

"To avoid them asking me to be their bride" Replies Sei playing along.

"So whomever comes through can ask?" Asks Yar, a glint of hope in her eyes.

Sei reacts surprised by the question and their eyes meet, she looks away as they both smile.

"I" says Yar as she looks for words, her eyes set on Sei combing her hair away from her shoulders. "Actually I, I didn't" Yar stops as their eyes meet again. She closes her eyes and makes an effort to finish her thoughts, Sei's gaze got her confidence out for a second. "I set camp close by the night before the full moon" she says and sees Sei clutch her hands across her chest "The forest was so cold that I went looking for the cause, thinking there was an elemental, or

worse. I saw you dance as a dark veil that descended upon the forest. I was enchanted and It got so cold I thought I was going to loose my fingers”

Sei seems upset “Sometimes we require a moment for ourselves”

“And you had it” Says Yar “I closed my eyes and felt the chilling darkness dance around me, through me. That’s why I almost didn’t made it. I can take a bit of cold because I was brought up by Tundra Lions.”

Sei sits quiet, eyes closed, and has left the piece of bread on top of the bag.

“I want to apologize, I didn’t knew it was someone” Says Yar as she gets up, respectfully understanding Sei’s posture “And to thank you for the bread, it was delicious” She bows as she walks away, and in complete silence fades through the bushes that go to the creek.

Sei expression shows she’s debating with herself, and after a brief moment she breathes deeply to allow everything to fade from her thoughts. Relaxedshe opens her ruby eyes and stares at the bread, it brings her a memory of Tya playing with her, she grabs it and takes a bite.

As she chews, she slowly lifts her head and sees Yar kneeling just in front of the bushes.

"If I can still see you through your veil" Asks Ya "does that mean that I can make a question?"

Sei almost chokes as she swallowed the bread by the surprise. Yar crawls a couple steps forward and Sei seems to not know how to react. Yar takes another couple steps and now is as close as she was before.

"What is your name?" Asks Yar.

"Oh" says Sei, relaxing a bit as she expected a different question, the thought of it brings a smile to her face.

"It's Ok" says Yar "I really just want more bread, it's delicious!"

They both chuckle slightly, "Please have more" Says Sei.

"It's so good, do you make it?" Asks Yar.

"No, somehow it's always there, whenever needed"

Yar realizes Sei is talking about someone, she slowly tastes the flavor in her mouth, then taps her chest plate and

gets a small vial full of honey "Out of nowhere, whenever needed" She says and looks at Sei. "Do you know her?".

"Who?" Asks Sei, but she knows that's one of Tya's honey vials.

"The Fencer, they call her Hummingbird but what I saw was more like a flying viper" Yar lifts her arms and waves it like a snake trying to imitate what she described.

"Do you have feelings for her?" asks Sei and stares waiting for an answer, with an expression that cannot be read.

Yar stutters "uhm like, uhmm, the" she cannot look away from Sei's eyes, the dark ruby and the absence of emotion call for a soul to answer.

Yar takes a deep breath, cracks her neck and shakes her head "I have never lost a battle" She says "And I don't mean to impress, the battles I fight either I win or I'm dead. Weeks ago, an urgent call was made to rescue a group of warlocks in the Vermin Peak"

Sei looks in disbelief "That place is forbidden"

Yar nods as she knows what Sei will ask next

“Who was up there?”

“Everybody knew they only made the call because one of them was someone special that should come back, whatever the cost. That mission was certain death If you didn’t had an army, a powerful one. The small group had been stuck there for three days and three nights until we arrived. There were three rescue parties, me with a group of people that invited volunteers in the guild, another one that seemed to be ruthless mercenaries, and a half a dozen Tower Guards.

“That’s not enough” Sei replied.

“You are right. The warlocks had a fire shield around them but couldn’t get out, a fierce vermin swarm had them surrounded and attacked the shield without a pause, even as they bursted into flames. There was only one Warlock alive when we arrived. And we fell into the trap as well, It was like if we were ambushed. Wave after wave of the monsters fell onto us. We had reached the peak by dawn and by midnight there was only two of us left”

Yar reaches for another piece of bread and parts it to share with Sei, who just blinks, reminding Yar she expects an answer.

“Ok” says Yar as she cleans her face “The tower guard had some kind of numismata, the magic on that device made him oblivious to damage but he was tired, he couldn’t even shake off the vermin on top of him. I had a clearing around me” She says as she extends her arm and axe to show her reach “But I had to keep moving, the ground was loose gravel shards and vermin pieces, so difficult to maneuver, I knew at any moment a random attack would be my death. Then Is when I saw her. She had came from the top of the peak itself and she, she...” Yar pauses as she was about to use beautiful words to describe her savior.

“She what?” Asks Sei, her voice different, as if worried.

“The way she carved a path through the Vermin swarm” Replied Yar “She moved with so much fierceness and elegance my heart stopped, I knew help could be here but it was only one person, I almost got killed that second for loosing focus, so I started to move towards the guard and yelled at them to clear a path for him to save the warlock. She saw me and saw the tower guard up to his knees in sliced vermin. The guard looked at her and she pointed at me and yelled at him, look at her clearing!”

Then the guard changed hands on its sword and threw me his gauntlet. I ran towards it and the moment I clasped it I could feel it, nothing hurt on my body, so I went all In and I

sliced open a path with my axe. I reached the warlock and she was already on her knees, surrounded by bodies and charred vermin corpses, she dissipated her shield and the first thing I thought was to put the gauntlet in her hand and throw her towards..."

"You threw her?" asks Sei

"Oh yeah, you use your weight to..."

"It's ok, please continue"

"So as she's on the air, the tower guard yelled something at her and the moment she hit the ground a blast of purple light..."

"Umanstreee" Sei says "Vermin see better in the pits of dark so an Umanstree flash will blind them but not us"

"I see, thank you " Says Yar, "And that distraction was enough for the guard to grab the warlock and follow the fencer as she opened a path towards the higher ground from where she arrived. I could barely keep up with them, but I knew she would stop if something happened. We climbed and we got to the other side there was just a white cliff that descended in a very steep incline. She told the guard "she'll live" and the guard wrapped the warlock in his

arms and dived, not caring for his own health. Then I asked her "will we make it?" and she just motioned for me to cross my legs and wrap my arms around my head and then..."

Yar pauses and stares at Sei ruby eyes, she wants to use the best words to answer her question about what does she feel about the fencer. But Sei seems more worried as she listens to the danger they were in.

Yar smiles and continues "And then she hugged me tight and said we might survive and she gave me a kiss on the cheek as she pulled us into the cliff. The snow was already flowing in an avalanche and the swarm arrived behind us just after that. When I woke up, two tower guard parties were there. The warlock had made it alive but the guard that jumped with her didn't. I got scared as they were attending me and ask about the fencer, they said she was unharmed and had left already. I only injured my leg and my shoulder but the healers attended me"

"I reached Castleguild the next day, and learned that she had been there already and left me a note, to please take her part of the bounty to the families of those the guild sent and were lost, so I did, and later on I went following her last path. And that's how I got here"

Sei seems calm as you can see her guard is no longer up, as she appears to analyze the events.

“And it was the best thing that ever happened” Says Yar
“Well, after I mean my life being saved, because I got to see you, dancing under the moon, and I wondered what more wonderful things I have been given the opportunity to find?”
She sits straight up, proud of her words.

Sei’s eyes say so much, right now is like looking at the eye of the storm. “I meant to hear your hearth as I listen to mine”
Sei says “And I apologize if it looked like, like if I was asking someone to confess. I just wanted to hear what you thought of her, because, we might be a bit similar, so your opinion says what do you think of a part of me”

“All good” Says Yar with a charming smile “I’m actually flattered, but seems the story got you a bit upset”

“With myself” says Sei with regret “When she told me she had been to the Vermin peak, I was distracted on something else so I dismissed her because I thought it was her usual scouting. She shouldn’t had gone without me, she should have come to me. Even if there was no time”

“Maybe is not so easy to reach you” Says Yar

Sei is taken aback by that comment. She looks at the bag of bread and touches her face where Tya kissed her.

"...What more wonderful things we can find..." Sei says as she looks at Yar "What are Tundra Lions?"

"Hey that's two questions" Yar says laughing "and I still..."

"A question per bread" Says Sei as Yar bites into another one.

"Hey that's not fair, these are delicious"