

The Rift - *Prir*

“But Abel, we cannot attack the Nordic tribes head on. I understand that we outnumber them, but they have retreated back to THEIR lands. We do not stand a chance at defeating them within their own terrain.” Sage pleaded with his king, but deep down he knew there was no changing his mind.

“I do not care. Harald will pay for what he has done. How could he kill my only boy? He was so young and had so many things yet to accomplish. And all over a stupid barkeep’s daughter! I will not rest until he befalls the same fate as Alexander. Harald Leif’s head will rest on a spike for eternity when I am through with him.” Abel Rudland furiously pounded his fist on the war table where he had seated himself.

Most of the war pieces tumbled and fell off the sides from the force of the human kings rage.

“I know what he did was uncalled for, sire. I’m sure we can meet with Daealla and Orrowyn and they will join our cause. Then we can vote him out of command and replace Harald with a new leader,” Sage bleated as he slowly kneeled down to pick up the fallen pieces. “And then if it comes down to it we would at least have allies for the war that breaks out.”

“Oh bet your ass war will break out, Sage. Orrowyn himself fled before we awoke. That bastard probably helped Harald plan all of this. I’ve known for quite some time the mage thinks this whole treaty is a pointless waste of time, but I didn’t see him rushing to Harald’s side to kill my boy.” The king paused for a moment as his eyes wandered over to his son’s armor in the corner of the room. They had found the boy’s body in the barkeep’s shed the day after his severed head had been found. It was cold and lifeless, laying in a pool of blood and already starting to rot. He had been planning on giving his son his new set of golden armor as they made their way back after the treaty, but now he regretted not giving it to him sooner.

“Whether the woodland elves and mages side with us or Harald, the treaty has been broken. I plan on attacking that miserable excuse of a man no matter the cost. It must be done. In the name of Alexander Rudland, it must be done.” The king stood and slowly walked out of his solar, leaving Sage to himself. Abel had been fuming since he found Alexander’s head plunged on to that spike. It had been nearly four days of rage, but now the grief was settling in. As he paced the halls of his castle he realized he was subconsciously making his way towards Alexander’s room. He continued heading that way, but as he got to the door he stopped. He couldn’t bring himself to enter the boy’s room and he knew that he would never be able again unless the man responsible for his death had been punished. He turned and decided to head to the kitchens. It had been four days since his son’s death and four days since Abel’s last meal, but he now knew what he must do would require him to be at full strength.

After his meal he paced back to the war room in hopes of finding Sage. As he neared the door he heard voices inside and assumed Sage had called the king's other trusted advisors for a meeting. He opened the door and was shocked to see Daealla within the room with Sage. "Daealla, what are you doing here? How did you get in? I have the city on full guard and -"

"Abel, you know I have my ways. Full guard or not I can make my way into any city unnoticed. But that is beside the point, I am here to talk strategy. I know what you are planning to do."

Daealla stared into Abel's soul. She had the most beautifully ominous eyes he had ever seen, and it was almost as if her gaze was calming him by the second. "Good, Ymir knows we could use the help." Abel walked to his chair and sat across from Daealla as Sage pulled a chair by his king. "Have you heard anything from Orrowyn Daealla? I want to know if that coward had anything to do with this and if he will side with Harald or us." Daealla averted her gaze from the king for the first time since he entered, and the calm feeling vanished.

"I have heard nothing from him, but I know he had nothing to do with your son's death. One of my children saw everything that happened that night. I will spare you the details bu-"

The king cut off the Woodland Queen. "You will do no such thing. I will know how my son died, it is a father's right to know."

Daealla nodded, but didn't speak right away. After a moment had passed she finally explained the details of that night to Abel. By the end of the tale the king was shaking with anger. "And your boy, why didn't he step in to do anything? Why didn't he run to tell anyone?"

"He is only 15 years of age, Abel. What would he have done against a man such as Harald? He was scared out of his wits that night and hid behind the bar until well after the norsemen had left. And I would've told you sooner as well had you not left for your city's walls so quickly. I know you are grieving Abel, but we are on your side and behind you no matter what. What Harald did... there is no excuse for it. He must pay for his crimes and we MUST return peace to our lands. Unfortunately, I believe the only way to do so will be to start a war that will remove him from power."

"And Orrowyn, what of him? I know you two have been close for many years now." Abel questioned.

“We don’t know of his true involvement, but it seems as if he has sides with Harald. We will do what we must Abel, and if that involves removing Orrowyn from this world than it will be a sacrifice I must make.”

Abel leered at Daealla. He wasn’t sure she would be able to kill one of her closest friends if it came to it, but he knew he would have no issue doing what she could not if Orrowyn had anything to do with the death of Alexander. The human king stood and turned to the door. “It is settled then, we will meet just south of The Shivering Valley. Head back to your people, Daealla, and be sure they are prepared. We head for war at the next full moon.”