

An Elf Chronicles: A Brothers' War

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Prologue: Murder

The palace was quiet in Faelia. The city was bustling and hustling, and the high elves were conversing with other elf races. The palace guard was resting their eyes as the sun was setting while the emperor, gray and dull, pondered his choice of succession. He can not make up his mind as the need was not a matter to. However, a noise disturbed him which was unsettling. Elves in dark clothes snuck in, and the horn sounded. The guards were prepared for it, but the hunt was precarious. The thought of a traitor entered the emperor's mind.

The assassins jumped the first one that called, "Intruder!"

The other killed one assassin and called, "It's a Margra elf..."

The emperor's thoughts were, *Why them, they never venture out of their isles for a decade?*

The guards sealed the doors and hunted the rogues. The three were cornered and butchered by the guards, but a party of Margra elf assassins opened the gate at the walls. The other blood elf warriors in black armor entered and helped push the guards back, but the ones outside were slaughtered to a man.

The Margra elf captain came in with a bright yellow horse haired plume, "Why the halt in the advance?"

The sergeant at arms pointed to the doors, "We were not quick enough!"

The captain laughed at the sergeant, "Bring up the wolves!"

The soldiers pulled up the battering rams that could be carried in by hand and battered the great doors one at a time. When one team got tired or killed off by guard archers, another team replaced it to push up momentum. The doors fell to the attackers as the guards pulled back to the killing alley up the stairs. The shouts became trouble as the Margra elves managed to gain the upper floor at great cost.

The emperor thought, *Wreckless fools, they do not give up easily!*

"My liege!" The guard yelled. "It's time to flee!"

"Flee my own palace, madness!" The emperor bellowed at the guards. "My sword, I shall die with my men!"

"Very well," the guard replied sadly as he grabbed his sword. "I shall be there with you!"

"No," the emperor pointed to the secret exit. "Warn Alvaro, tell him to seek the Dark elves!"

“The wild ones?” The guard was shocked. “It’s suicide!”

The emperor pushed him to the secret exit, “Obey me, tell Alvaro now!”

The guard was in tears. Yet, he went down and out to a tunnel which a boat was in handy. He rowed out and was scared to look back even for a split second which was now swarming with Margra Elves. He threw up a cloak and continued out.

The emperor gathered his remaining palace guard and locked himself in the throne room with his men. He waited for the end, and the sound of ramming was his countdown. The ramming was louder and louder which was irritating the most veteran of the palace guards. As the door fell open, the emperor watched his own imperial stormtroopers turn on him. He exclaimed, “Traitors!”

The palace guards were killed to a man. The emperor watched as the captain of the imperial guard walked, “How much for this betrayal?”

The captain laughed, “Sixty pieces of gold coins!”
“You die sc...” The emperor fell to the captain as he tried to kill the snake.

The captain, a scarred elf, cleaned his blade, “Is Alvaro here?”
“No sir!” The imperial guard gets grabbed by the captain. “He was campaigning in the south against some Brown Elf nomads!”
“You failed!” The captain yelled at the guardsman. “Our work is for naught, and Mael will kill us for it!”

“His father is dead,” the guardsman replied.

“You mean take what victory this is,” the captain thought for a moment. “Yea, we were lucky tonight, but we must get Alvaro soon!”

“Yes sir!” The guardsman left as the captain thought for a moment.

We were too lucky, he thought for a moment. We should’ve met huge resistance which didn’t come.

The noise of battle returned to him. The blood elves took on the entire army which the guards finished off. The battle died down as the coup became successful. The wives and daughters would be sent to elvish kings as alliance chips while Alvaro’s betrothed will be sent south to keep hold on the imperial navy. Yet, Alvaro got problems of his own to deal with.

Chapter 1: The Vengeful Fox

In several months, Alvaro was not too interested in princely life. The prince left his palace and joined the Elvish legion which promoted him to its captain-general. The nomads were making trouble in the sands, and the imperial colonists requested aid. The legion honorably battled for the colonist farmers as the nomads were raiding the farms. Alvaro loved this adventure which kept him from going bored. Yet, Alvaro anticipated word from his scouts.

Alvaro spotted some scout horsemen with his sunburned skin hands coming this way, “What’s the news?”

One pointed to a sand dune, “They are coming in a swarm!”

The noise startled them as Alvaro pointed to camp, “Spread the word, prepare for battle!”

The scouts nodded and left him in a hurry as he mounted his white steed, “Look sharp lad, those nomads are coming for us!”

The nomads peered over the dune which looked like nats on rotted fruit. Alvaro can’t see an end but a beginning, “My, I was not expecting thousands!”

The elvish legion appeared behind him, “Shield wall, archers wait for my signal!”

The elves with their kite shields formed a shield wall as the archers prepared their noisemakers first. The nomads charged, but the legion stood firm as the nomads came screaming at them. Then Alvaro gave the signal as the noisemakers flew past the horsemen and caused the horses to buckle, and confusion ensnared the nomads. Alvaro gave another signal to send another volley, but this time the arrows hit their marks on the horse and rider. Alvaro swung his sword forward and trotted his horse as the legion followed him at a march. The leader of the nomads decided to lunge at Alvaro, but the prince outwitted his foe with his saber and unhorsed him in a sword fight of kilij which took mere seconds of Alvaro’s time. The chieftain pleaded, “Spare me Alvaro, and I won’t raid again.”

“Go before I add you to my lists of slain men!” The chieftain called for a retreat and fled as Alvaro stopped the march of his legion. “Halt, we fall back once they are gone!”

The nomads disappeared while Alvaro pulled his men back to the fort. The last skirmish was a miracle, but it was one of many stunts Alvaro pulled to save lives to achieve gain. Yet, Alvaro spotted his old friend from the palace guards, “How’s father, Barian?”

“He’s dead,” the guardsman replied. “He said to find the dark...”

“My quarters now!” Alvaro ushered in Barian as he kicked out his servants in a hurry. “What sick joke is this? My mother is a half-Dark elf!”

“No joke,” Barian replied. “Your father ordered that you must find them before he died!”

“Tonight, we ride!” Alvaro replied. “The legion will be missed though.”

“Us?” Barian replied.

“Yes,” Alvaro replied. “I don’t want to do this on my own!”

“Very well,” Barian replied as he knew that this will be daunting

At midnight, the duo escaped the fort and fled to the realm of Quenya which is ruled by a warrior prince. Alvaro and Barian were having a good time until an elvish patrol caught their sight and chased them, “What do we do?”

“Outrun them!” Alvaro galloped to Quenya’s border while Barian followed. However, they were encircled until the dark elvish lancers charged home, and Alvaro booked it as Barian followed tail. The Dark Elves then encircled Alvaro and Barian with lowered lances.

“Who are you, stranger?” A woman’s voice came from one of the lancers.

“Alvaro, I seek an army!” Alvaro replied.

“We seek our capital of Eris that your people took!” The woman’s voice sounded harsh.

“We will discuss it later,” Alvaro wanted to escape another patrol. “I seek the prince of the Dark elves!”

“Father, yes, I will take you to him.” The woman revealed herself. “Idril of the winds, I head this patrol. Please, follow me!”

Alvaro felt unease about following people that his mother distrusted. Yet, the prince had no choice as he is now a wanted deserter. The princess pointed to a fortified town, “Not much, she still holds on despite others trying to take her from our orc companies!”

“I’m sorry, orcs?” Alvaro replied. “Those beasts that mutated from the exiles?”

“The one and only, they provided better infantry than any dark elf could!” She replied with zeal.

“Sir,” Barian replied as he watched the city. “This is trea...”

“Not in front of her?” Alvaro whispered at Barian. “If I need an army, it will be this place!”

“Very well,” Barian replied. “I warned you though!”

“Gentlemen, are we ready?” Idril asked the two who nodded in reply. “Splendid, please follow me to Morius!”

The princess led the two strangers inside the humble city as a messenger went ahead to tell Ahpa Herahi that the strangers are here to get an army. The Prince greeted the outsiders, “ So you want an army to wage civil war, don’t you?”

Alvaro motioned Barian to keep a distance as servants seated him in a chair, “ I intend to avenge my father’s murderers!”

The Prince laughed at the emperors’ son’s most humble request, “ What do you offer to solidify this request?”

Alvaro pulled out his mother’s jewels which shocked Barian, “ No, don’t...”

Alvaro raised his hand at Barian, “ I offer this and Eris!”

The Prince was amused by this offer, “ It would be perfect for a marriage alliance, but you don’t have enough for..”

“I volunteer to marry him!” Idril stepped forward in eagerness for adventure.

“No,” Ahpa tried to stop Idril. “He is too cheap!”

“I think that king Trident would not insult my gifts!” Alvaro tried to leave as Idril stopped him.

“I don’t intend to marry you if your father is adamant.”

“He’s prideful, but I want Eris back!” Idril eyes lit up like diamonds in the light. “Quenya needs her city back!”

Alvaro looked at Ahpa who finally relented, “ So be it, you got a week to claim it or no marriage!”

Alvaro nodded, “ A week then, I require twelve thousand men and nothing more!”

“Work a miracle, and she’s yours.” Ahpa walked out as Barian and Alvaro left the throne room.

“It took your father months to take it, and you intend to take it in a week!” Barian mounted his horse outside. “This is madness!”

“I have been there.” Alvaro replied simply as he mounted his white steed. “I have a plan to reach it!”

A stranger rode up and saluted the pair, “ I am Selim, I am sent to command your twelve thousand army.”

Alvaro saluted back, “ Alvaro the brown elf conqueror, and this is Barian my friend!”

“Yes my prince,” Selim replied. “We advance when you are ready.”

Alvaro rode out of the walled city with an army. The border was lined with sandstone mountains as the army marched past it. As they neared the city, Alvaro halted the army at the

cistern's mouth, "I request sixty men to follow me on foot through the cistern, and the rest to spread out around the city waiting for the signal by torch!"

"I should come along," Selim offered.

"I have Barian, move!" The sixty dark elves followed Alvaro as the rest spread out around Eris. The men, who followed Alvaro, looked like his old guards: heavily armed to the teeth and dangerous if threatened. Alvaro spotted a odd soldier who he stopped, "Are you suicidal my princess?"

"I wanted to see Eris first hand!" Idril revealed herself now. "It is too late to fall back."

"I got plans," Alvaro replied. "But I need you ready once the sun is down."

Idril nodded as Alvaro halted the men and pointed to the tunnel to the city, "Tell them that we wait here Idril!"

"Yes my prince," Idril walked off as Alvaro rolled his eyes.

"She likes you, you know!" Barian laughed at Alvaro's predicament.

"I wanted an army," Alvaro replied. "I am scared to take her with me home."

"It's time!" Idril replied as she came back. "So we climb?"

"Yes, we do." Alvaro led the sixty men up the tunnel and through a manhole as Alvaro whispered. "Barian, lead half and raise Selim, Idril and the rest with me!"

Barian led a party at the gates and raised Selim at torchlight while taking out the guards. Alvaro and Idril reached the gates and opened it, but they were ambushed. Alvaro drew his sword, "Get the gates open, I hold off the attackers."

Idril nodded and helped get the gates to open up to see Selim there, "Help Alvaro, then march on!"

"Yes Lady Idril," Selim drew his kilij and helped fight off Alvaro's attackers. "Glory hog, I knew that you were a legionary."

"Doesn't matter now." Alvaro finished off the last guards. "I am a vengeful fox now."

Before Alvaro could think, the city mayor came under a flag of truce, "What are your terms?"

Alvaro pointed at the gates, "Anyone can leave! Those who want to stay, can stay."

"I leave now after I gathered loyalists." The mayor replied as Alvaro saluted him.

"You are lenient." Idril replied as she finally could rest on a mount again.

“I wanted the city with little blood, and I have succeeded.” Alvaro started to drink imperial whine for the first time in weeks. “The city is yours, not your fathers.”

“No,” Idril smiled. “It’s your wedding gift since you took it.”

“Very well,” Alvaro mounted on his white steed which was brought in by a dark elf. “Imagine the empire's shock when they hear of the Vengeful fox’s incursion.”

“They try to crush it.” Idril replied. “Your legion will execute you.”

“My legion is compromised anyways.” Alvaro replied. “Some are due wages, and the rest were supposed to be settled by now!”

“So you intend to face your friends now?” Idril questioned Alvaro.

“Not yet,” Alvaro looked at the procession leaving the city, mostly low born elves and colonists.

“I intend to strike fast on other companies until I face the legion itself.”

“Sleep first,” Idril replied as she eyed the old palace. “Then you can war on your own people.”

Alvaro nodded and rode to the palace which was converted to the mayor's villa. Alvaro slept as Idril threw out the imperial rubbish that she didn’t like. This continued until Alvaro woke up to her sleeping. Yet, Alvaro left her to sleep as he brushed off the dirt off his armor, but he eyed the imperial elf’s cavalry armor which had no owner. He heard, “It’s yours since no one wanted it.”

Alvaro turned back and saw Idril waking up, “My spoils?”

Idril nodded, “The subjects fear me despite liberating the city!”

“You people waited too late,” Alvaro continued to check out the armor. “Appoint a new mayor and get ready to move on.”

“You don’t like this city?” Idril looked at him with curiosity. “It’s yours?”

“I have Faelia to reconquer.” Alvaro replied as he took the armor with him. “I do thank you for giving me this city.”

Idril watched him walk out, “Odd fellow, he has good qualities, but he likes to fight on though.”

Alvaro in a gold armor with the horse haired plume saw Barian riding to him, “What’s the news, friends?”

Barian, out of breath spoked, “Over twenty thousand imperials are marching here!”

Alvaro, unfazed, ordered Selim, “We will fight them in the ravines!”

Selim looked at Alvaro, “Ambush them?”

Alavro nodded as he drew the ravine with two archers on the sides and an orc company in the center, “This company holds the imperials while the archers pick off any men once the orcs are engaged.”

Selim nodded, “It will be done, my Prince.”

Alvaro seemed annoyed, “Did Idril put you up to it?”

Selim shook his head, “My custom would forbid me from being unpleasant.”

Alvaro nodded, “Very well, I wished to be sir though.”

“We marched now?” Alvaro nodded to Selim’s question as the dark elf captain-general signaled to march. “Very well sir, we will trounce this army too!”

The Quenyian army marched to the ravine which looked like barren rocks. The orc company formed up with spears and shields while odd orcs stood out front: spaced out and enough room to use their fiendish two handed axes. Alvaro noticed these odd orcs, “Who are they?”

“Crazies!” Selim replied as he posted men to be ready with their bows while the orcs ready their crossbows. “Or as you, high elves, would say, berserkers!”

“Get the archers ready!” Alvaro ordered. “And keep an eye on Idril!”

“Not you?” Selim asked as he grabbed his bow. “My master would hate to see you dead!”

“I can manage with Barian pestering me, now go!” Selim left Alvaro as the elf prince pulled out a nice bow with Barian watching him. “If you are watching me, grab the shield!”

“Yes sir!” Barian grabbed a shield to join Alvaro.

The imperial elf army marched to the orcs. The noise was not unhinging them, but the berserkers' noise was unnerving Alvaro as he placed an arrow on the draw string. Alvaro waited til the two groups were engaged to fight. The imperial elves halted which Alvaro knew to be bad, but the berserkers challenged them. The imperial elves broke and attacked which Alvaro noted, *These are raw troops, maybe garrison boys.*

The berserkers axed left to right as the raw elvish warriors passed them and got impaled on the orcish pikes. Alvaro waited until he knew the imperials to have no tricks. Barian looked down and whispered, “When sir?”

“When I am certain that this is isolated,” Alvaro replied. “You see imperial horsemen?”

“Not yet,” Barian replied. “I see the baggage train, finally.”

“Yes,” Alvaro released his arrow which everyone replied. “I hope that Orcs can handle it!”

“They can handle it because they are the Black Orcs!” Idril replied on her mount which looked like a red mare. “These are not the typical brutes.”

“You should be by Selim!” Alvaro hollered at her. “You shouldn’t be near me!”

Barian blocked an arrow heading for Alvaro, “I hope Alvaro that you are not as death wishing as your younger self was.”

“I will head back,” Idril replied. “Signal us for a lancer pursuit.”

“Very well,” Alvaro replied as Idril rode off. “I will.”

More orc companies appeared to bolster their brothers. Alvaro noticed that the imperials were breaking off, so he signaled Selim to charge the fleeing troops. Alvaro mounted and drew his sword, “Coming old friend?”

“I need a break, go on.” Barian found a boulder to sit on.

Alvaro saluted and left Barian to charge the fleeing imperials down the ravine through an earthen ramp. Alvaro slashed and hacked the imperials like a wolf, but he got cocky and was surrounded by elvish spears. Alvaro hit the spears like a trapped bear until Selim broke in with Dark elvish lancers, “Idril regrets not joining you. But insisted on keeping you alive.”

“Are the imperials routed?” Alvaro was taking a breath from the fight.

“Yes, they fled like frightened children!” Selim smiled. “Should we finish it?”

“No,” Alvaro sheathed his kilij. “Pull back after your men dispose of the dead in graves to Eris.”

“Very well,” Selim ordered the burial of the dead as Alvaro left him. Eris hugged him as Alvaro dismounted his horse.

“You are good luck to us.” Idril leaned on him. “Stay, join us!”

“I’m not a dark elf.” Alvaro replied.

“Rest, we resume this discussion.” Idril sat Alvaro down on a stool. “We should be done.”

“No,” Alvaro looked at the dead who were being buried. “It is just starting now.”

“War, you mean?” Idril asked Alvaro as he nodded at her.

Idril rubbed his back and left to give Selim more instructions. The Dark elf army vanished as the imperials came looking for their friends and saw a massed grave. The imperials withdrew because they could not know if they would be hit too. The news of the massacre reverberated at Faelia as the citizens were told that Alvaro is dead with the Dark elf resurgence. The Faelian empire is rocked and looks to the Elvish legion for help as the Dark elves are raiding their borders now. The word, the vengeful fox, is now a wanted criminal.

Chapter 2: Mutiny

The Elvish legion was assembled to wait for a new leader. The members of the legion heard about the Dark Elf rampages and other raids, but they are still mourning Alvaro's death. The captains refused to believe that Alvaro was dead, but the captain-general arrived. The new elf looked scary and in a dark uniform.

"Gentleman," The captain-general addressed his men. "The Dark elves of Quenya have invaded without warning and have recaptured Eris. They are encouraged by a rogued high elf called Vengeful fox. He is to be hunted down and killed, no exceptions! Are you ready?"

"Sir!" The legion lined up and followed the captain general to the colonist settlement by Eris as the new elf surveyed the area. The elf settlers are watching the legion march past them, and they too are scared. Then the new elf pointed at the village.

"Evacuate and burn it." The new elf declared.

"Sir, we just..."

"Don't question me," The new elf ordered. "I want the fields and buildings burnt!"

"Sir!" The legion did as their captain-general ordered. The legion escorted and helped the settlers flee with what they could carry. The rest set fire to the village and fields while they wept. Alvaro, not far from a dune, secretly wept with them, but he did not want to show himself yet. The prince was alone almost until Idril arrived.

"You alright," She asked as she joined him off her horse. "I thought that you could use company?"

"There," Alvaro pointed at the inflamed village. "I helped with the nomad problems last year, but now, it's a charred ruin."

"Oh," She hugged him. "Things are replaceable."

"It was not to me." Alvaro almost despaired. "Stay with me."

"Certainly," Idril sat by Alvaro while Selim watched from a distance. The dark elf princess watched the burning with him, but she saw Selim waving at them to head back to Eris. Idril woke Alvaro out of his despondancy, "We need to head back!"

Alvaro looked at Selim waving, "Yes, we should."

Selim greeted Alvaro with his horse as Idril mounted hers, "I thought that you would want your steed."

Alvaro nodded, "Thanks!"

Alvaro mounted his steed and fell back to Eris. Next day, Alvaro hit imperial elf forts and outposts, but the new elf kept burning food and souring water. Yet, Alvaro was keeping his distance as he played cat and mouse with his new adversary. Idril finally protested to him, “We got to end these games!”

“Soon,” Alvaro looked at the smoke. “I want to exhaust the new elf then show my face,”

“That’s suicide!” Idril yelled at him.

“I know,” Alvaro replied. “I am hoping that my men can make a choice.”

The elvish legion marched back as the Dark elf forces fell back. They had it with their captain-general, and they were stretching their lines. A captain grumbled, “If we left the water alone, we could have used it!”

“Silent you,” The captain-general hollered at them. “We must deny them everything!”

The elvish legion stopped and rested. The next day, they resumed their march to the mouth of the ravine, but the orcish spearmen blocked it. The rider in goldish-brown rode out to meet them which terrified them, “I am the vengeful fox!”

“Arrest him on charges of desertion!” The orcish legion charged their spears forward as Idril struggled to get free from Selim.

“Let me loose!” Idril demanded.

“No, I was ordered to keep you alive!” Selim replied as he struggled to keep her back.

“My father or Alvaro?”

“Both!” Idril finally sobbed as Selim consoled her.

The rider waved the orcs down with a chuckle, which they obeyed by standing at attention, “Black orcs, good lads, I show you who I am!”

The rider took off his helmet when the legion saw their old commander and stepped back, “Steady, it’s a trick!”

“No trick,” Alvaro trotted closer to the line of Elvish spears. “You want me for deserting fine, but I can not let this madness continue!”

An Elvish warrior fainted while the rest looked at their commander. The commander looked at them, “Back, back I say!”

The legion dragged him off his horse as the commander thrashed him and presented him to Alvaro as a captain announced with his drawn kilij, “Your grievance is ours now! We fight for you!”

The two Elvish warriors revealed the elf as a Margra elf with reddish skin which Barian recognized, “ You were there!”

“You wrecked our coup which we work hard for!” The Margra elf broke free and ran to the orcs who cut him down.

Selim and Idril rode down while Selim asked, “ What will you do now?”

“We march on Port Hope where a Brown elf prince rules there.” Alvaro mounted his steed and pointed his sword north-west. “There we wait for Trident!”

“Trident is a rogue!” Barian argued as they rode. “I suggest the others.”

“They are not interested if Mael sits on the throne!” Alvaro looked to see nomads following him.

“Trident has been my friend since childhood!”

“Raised in court does not mean blood brothers!”

“I think that we have the worst problems ahead.” Alvaro saw the chief in front of him now.

“Halt, protect the dromedaries!”

“Peace friend!” The chief revealed himself as a young brown elf. “I am Jorgunius of the sands and a friend to the vengeful fox now!”

“You are welcome to come, friend.” Alvaro motioned for march. “It will not be easy.”

“I know the Prince of Port Hope and will help you to get in.” Jorgunius offered.

“Fine, I need all the help that I can get!”

Alvaro moved with the column as the nomads followed him by swelling numbers. The hoard descended into the mountains as Alvaro looked at the port city by evening tide. Idril walked beside him, “ The sea is beautiful!”

Alvaro smiled, “ How do we get married?”

Idril smiled back, “ We are in a way.”

Alvaro laughed, “ You Dark elves and your customs!”

“We feel the same about the high elves too!” She smiled back.

Alvaro kissed her by accident which she replied back in turn. Alvaro picked Idril up and took her to his tent, and the morning arrived brightly to awake the lovers. The invaders approached the city as the prince of the port hollered, “ You have quarreled with me?”

“None kinsmen!” Jorgunius hollered back. “We wished to stay until our fleet arrived!”

“You can stay,” The prince laughed. “I want to see this fable fleet, open the gates!”

The gates were thrown open to the Elvish legion while the nomads danced. The legion matched in as Alvaro rode in at the head of the elf legion. The people stared at the dark elf lancers escorting Idril in a colorful dress fit for a daughter of a feared nation. Alvaro dismissed them, “No looting, try to keep the fun to a minimum.”

“Barian,” Alvaro nodded at a colorful jeweled javelin at a booth which Alvaro needed to get Trident’s attention. “Ask the smith how much for it, I will be at the docks.”

Barian nodded and rode off. Finally with two bodyguards, Alvaro rode to the docks and sat there just staring at the waves which roll gently today. Alvaro did not care if war resumed, but he wanted to stare at the sea before he left it. Idril came up alone as Alvaro allowed her near him, “You like sight seeing though the waves look no different to me.”

“Why come alone?” She pointed to Selim as he responded. “Does he know yet?”

“His job is to protect me,” Idril shrugged off his question. “What’s your target if Trident comes?”

“Port Safety,” Alvaro pointed across the ocean. “If I can take it, I can convince my brother to send an army to crush us.”

“Why,” Idril looked at the sea and him. “We have this port anyways, but your brother has a navy.”

“Have you ever seen the children of Poseidon? Have you?” Alvaro asked Idril.

“Mostly hear of them in myths and legends, I am more interested in where your people came from.” Idril replied. “Your people are secretive.”

“They came from the isle of High Mark.” Alvaro whispered. “Where is a mystery.”

“Why whisper?” Idril asked.

“You are my wife,” Alvaro gently held her hand. “I don’t want to bear my people’s secrets alone.”

“Was your mother ever so beautiful?” Idril raised her hands at Alvaro who did not want to discuss her. “Barian said to ask you.”

“She was indeed,” Alvaro whispered as he looked side by side. “Her hazels were adored by my father.”

“Mael?”

“Different mother, she was a cause for my departure.” Alvaro looked dejected. “My father had me raised by a maid while my mom watched from a distance. Never knew her demise.”

“Not a pure high elf?” Idril hugged. “The people mourn for you?”

“My people are complicated.” Alvaro kissed her. “My mom is a part high elf, but her mother was raised as a high elf princess.”

“My heart can not take it.” Idril almost sobbed. “I would rather marry you not as a prince but my warrior prince.”

“You want to officiate it?”

Idril summoned a priest forward. “He’s here to bless us, so we can continue our courtship.”

“Very well,” Alvaro nodded at the priest who splashed a sacred water on them and called them ‘married’.

Barian ran up with the javelin, “No charge, the nomad’s cousin said that it is on him.” “Remind me to repay it later.” Alvaro took the javel and headed to the end of the quay to wait. “What is he waiting on, Barian?” Idril asked.

“Weather!” While Barian replied, Alvaro took off his cloak and threw the javelin into the sea.

“What is next?” Idril looked at the ocean a bit more.

“Watch!” The sea lit up as the javelin became a beacon while the two watched Alvaro sit.

“Can we join him?” Idril wanted to be Alvaro.

“Think so, wave Selim down.” Idril nodded at Barian and waved Selim as she joined Alvaro.

“What are these ships like?” Idril was curious because she saw the fast corsairs, cogs, and hulks.

“Galleys,” Alvaro smiled. “These are oared vessels that can ram any ship without warning.”

As if it was on cue, the sea bubbled. Then a galley appeared, the ship was a two oared ship, but it lowered a gangplank. A voice bellowed, “How well is Alvaro, herald?”

“He’s well, Sea elf!” Alvaro replied. “Pray tell helmsman, is Trident well?”

“I am he!” The voice replied.

“I am coming aboard.” Alvaro moved to step on, but Idril hugged him. Alvaro hugged, “I will be fine, my love.”

The dark elf princess moved back and hid her tears. Alvaro moved to the end of the gangplank, but the hoplites greeted him with spears. The Sea elf leader waved his men down and greeted his friend with a hug. “Alvaro, I had not seen you since my father brought me home.”

“I wish that it was under better circumstances.” Alvaro replied.

“I heard of your father’s murder.” Trident ordered his men to summon the fleet. “In his memory, I want to join you, old friend.”

“Everything is at my disposal?” Alvaro shrugged it off. “You shouldn’t, you got..”

“No, it is at your disposal.” Trident insisted as a host. “When do you leave?”

“Now,” Alvaro ushered Idril onto the decks. “She is to sail with me too.”

“She can have my cabin.” Idril shrugged while Trident nodded. “My custom insists on it.”

Idril nodded and brought her luggage aboard as Trident talked to Alvaro, “Aubri is alive, but she is to be wed to that fool king who rules Port Safety in three days.”

“That is our heading.” Alvaro replied. “I see what your men can do.”

“It’s gonna be long.” Trident looked at Alvaro’s army. “Two to three hours to get it done.”

“I am taking your personal galley with my three hundred of the Elvish legion.” Alvaro replied.

“As you wish,” Trident loaded three hundred men and left while the rest loaded up on the now seen galleys. The galley slowly sank, and it slowly drifted under water. Next day, Idril was vomiting up while Trident and Alvaro went over the plan on the map layout under the ocean, “Port Safety is a tough nut to crack”

“The city is walled except toward the ocean.” Alvaro pointed to the south. “I need you to rise up in the bay, and my men will take over.”

“What about you dark elf?”

“She stays with Selim until her people arrive.” Alvaro pointed to the beach toward the east of the city. “I want the Orcs and the remaining dark elves there.”

Trident nodded with the plan and left. Alvaro and Idril watched the night carry on as the dark elf pointed up, “It’s pretty.”

“Agree.” Alvaro saw Idril sleep and kissed her as he placed a blanket on her. In the morning, the guard walked up and saw the galley, but he was knocked out by a sea elf hoplite with a kopis. Alvaro jumped on the quay, “With me, we have a wedding to crash!”

Idril watched Alvaro disappear as she waved him goodbye, “Selim, find twelve men and follow me.”

Idril started to vomit again as Selim ran to her assistance, “You need to rest?”

“I will be fine.”

“Does he not know that you are bearing his child?” Selim asked Idril with concern.

“I don’t want to hinder him.” Idril got off the galley. “Besides, he has got enough as it is.”

“Hiding it, doesn’t help!”

At the chapel, King Bomba was preparing to wed Aubri and walked in, “Is everything ready? Oh no...”

“I am taking over,” Alvaro pointed his kilij at him. “You are confined to your palace, clear everyone and find Aubri.”

“I will, my prince.” Aubri’s maid hollered at Alvaro.

“By all means, hurry.” The maid bowed at Alvaro and ran for her lady.

Aubri was preparing to take poison as the maid ran in, “Don’t witness me, my heart can not...”

The maid took the cup away, “He’s alive and is waiting.”

“Who?”

“Alvaro,” The maid became estacted. “He’s here!”

Aubri followed her maid and peaked out in her bridal dress, “It’s him!”

“Yes!” The maid goaded her in. “Go!”

Idril stepped up quietly and was shocked. Her love was with another woman and ran back to Selim, “I wished that I listened to you!”

“He wanted your army which he has admitted.” Selim consoled her. “He is sparring his friend from a bad marriage.”

“Friend?” Idril paused her crying. “I-I...”

“Barian told me.” Selim sat her down. “You can still have him, but it is not going to be easy.”

“Promise me that you won’t tell him.”

“My family are your servants.” Selim laughed. “I shall not tell anyone.”

The dark elves and the orcs unloaded onto the beaches, “I camp with my people.”

“Yes, my lady.” Selim helped Idril to the beach to have her own tent set up beside her people.

Alvaro was celebrating as he missed Idril, “Barian, where’s Idril?”

“Ill, I think sir.” Barian replied. “Selim said that it was sea sickness which she is shaking off.”

“Okay.” Alvaro sipped his wine as a nomad rider came in.

“Sir, Jurgunius reported that the brown elf kings have united to free Bomba!” The rider replied.

“Are we talking thousands?” Alvaro asked.

The rider nodded as Alvaro ordered Barian, “Tell Selim that I need the crazies and the army there!”

“Yes sir.” Barian left as Alvaro left Aubri.

“Are you leaving now?” Aubri asked. “We haven’t...”

Alvaro hugged her, “Later, I need to get space before the southern coalition gets help from Mael.”

Barian returned, “Selim is marshaling now! Shall I get the Elvish legion?”

“Yes,” Alvaro looked at the mountains to the north of the city. “I need everyone except for Trident’s men. I need them here!”

“I’m leaving now!” Barian left as Alvaro mounted his horse and waved the nomads to follow him.

Next morning, on the broken plains, the southern coalition was gathered as King Aelle laughed at the vengeful fox’s paltry number of orcs and nomad footmen, “You said thousands, friend? These are just dances and parties of these ruffians!”

“Beware my lord,” The brown elf servant replied. “These are as cunning as the fox himself!”

“Nonsense, I shall get rid of these too.” Aelle waved his sword at the small number of warriors and led the attack that his men charged down the hill. “Ride with me and rid these men!”

The attack seemed coming. The orcs and nomads just danced and taunted the army as their death seemed imminent. Then the golden-brown rider appeared as the coalition halted. Aelle urged them on, “Come on, we can...”

The rest of the army hidden behind the hill appeared in large numbers which the Brown elves trembled. The orcs started chanting with the nomads as the rider rode out alone under a flag of truce and met King Aelle, “Greetings King Aelle, I am the vengeful fox!”

“Greetings, Can I entreat that we wish to die?” King Aelle looked at him. “You looked like Alvaro the murdered prince that you killed.”

“I am he.” Alvaro looked at King Aelle’s men’s weariness and looked at King Aelle. “Tell Mael that I wished to meet his army in four months to contest the southern kingdoms.”

“What will you do with us?” King Aelle was becoming enraged at the no battle today. “I will not be ransomed.”

“Go home and watch it in four months.” Alvaro rode back as the Brown elves fell back. “Back to Port Safety

The army of Alvaro did as he ordered. The news of his crossing spread like wildfire. Everyone gossiped about it as the ghost of Alvaro came back for revenge. Faelia too was anxious about a civil war looming over the horizon. The imperial capital was about to be rocked.

Chapter 3: Civil War

In four months under imperial date 313, the imperial army mustered conscripts among the high elves. The court was reeling over the arrival of the pretender to the throne which frightened everyone. The officers were arguing until Mael arrived. He looked fair skinned but had a dark head of hair as he looked at his men angrily, “Is it him?”

The one-eyed imperial guard spoke, “We are not sure, sire, but King Aelle insists that it is him!”

“You, Brutus, are demoted to marshal this army to stop him.” Mael ordered the grzzled veteran as he gave him signed orders. “In any means, kill the pretender!”

“Yes sire!” Brutus marshaled what he could southward as the brown elf king's sat and picnicked in the clear sky on the hills overlooking the plains. Brutus was furious, “Curse king Aelle for refusing to aid me!”

“Sir!” An imperial officer in a blue cloak pointed at two riders. “It looks like a parley!”

“Make camp here and let them through!” The two riders rode through as Brutus greeted them.

“Friends, what do you have to parley me for?”

“I am Selim of the sands and hills!” The dark elf spoke. “My master wishes to duel you!”

“And if I refused?” Brutus was not interested in single combat at all.

“My master would call you a coward!” Brutus waved his hand and let the messenger speak more.

“He wishes to be done and go home with little bloodshed!”

“Very well,” Brutus considered his option. “We will meet here in three hours!”

“Agree with only our retinue of three hundred men.” Brutus nodded as Selim mounted his mare which was a bay horse. “We will meet later.”

Selim rode up and behind the hill which Alvaro spied on the cyclops, “Are you sure that it was him, Barian?”

“It's him!” Barian spat in anger. “He reinforced the Margrans as I escaped the carnage.”

“Is it arranged, Selim?” Alvaro noticed Selim approaching.

“It is,” Selim drank some mead as he looked over. “Idril wants to tell you good luck herself.”

Alvaro nodded, “Aubri does not want to see it anyways, but I am glad that she still does.”

“Very well, sir!” Selim waved at Idril who came to give Alvaro his sword.

“I’m watching today,” Idril replied as she gave him his kilij. “Do not get yourself killed.”

“Yes my lady,” Idril nodded and left as Alvaro turned to Barian. “Three hundred of the legion, ordered the rest to hide if it goes wrong.”

“Agree,” Barian unsheathed his sword. “I am coming likewise.”

“No,” Alvaro noticed the three hour marked now and mounted his horse. “You wait for Selim to leave then reinforce me!”

“Very well,” Barian waved the three hundred to march. “Stay alive.”

“I intend to, today.” Alvaro marched with his three hundred to meet Brutus who laughed.

“Laughing will not help you.”

“You will be dead soon,” Brutus nodded with an archer as Alvaro dismounted his horse. “I will be closer to my goals anyways.”

“Rogue!” Alvaro drew his kilij. “Let’s begin now.”

“Certainly,” Brutus lunged at Alvaro who threw the veteran to his right. Brutus sprang to his feet as Alvaro tried to cut him and was blocked. As the two evenly matched men fought, the imperial archer was aiming at Alvaro. Yet, Selim threw a dagger at him which Brutus shouted, “Duel is over, prepare for battle!”

Alvaro nodded for Selim to leave and waved his men into battle positions as Barian arrived, “Early, I am glad that you are.”

“You can not trust your kin today.” Barian shouted as the Elvish spears came charging at the Elvish legion. “What is the plan?”

“We hold while Jurgunius and Selim chew at the flanks like wolves.” Alvaro waved the archers forward.

“Very well,” Barian watched the Elvish spears charged down in a frenzy. “Today is a good day to die.”

“Archers, release!” The archers fired at the elvish spears which halted them. Alvaro waved to his men. “Charge!”

The two imperial infantry clashed like bitter foes. Two sides looked evenly matched until imperial lancers tried to flank them. Alvaro slew a captain, “Archers, watch the flanks, the rest with me!”

The imperial lancers nearly closed as the nomads counter charged them. The lancers fled as the orcish pikes and Dark elf lancers closed on the imperial spears who fled. Brutus with his

body charged on Alvaro as the elf prince mounted his white stead. Alvaro rode out, “Stay and fight, Barian with me!”

“Yes sir!” Barian quickly mounted his pinto horse and followed Alvaro. As the two met the bodyguard who raised spears forward. Selim rejoined Alvaro with some lancers. As Alvaro and Brutus closed, they split apart fast, and Brutus coughed blood and fell off. Alvaro pointed to the camp to Selim, “Let the women and children flee, slay the rest except the servants!”

“Yes sir,” Selim broke off with his lancers as Alvaro checked on Brutus.

“You should’ve killed me.” Brutus glared at Alvaro.

Alvaro stepped on him, “Is my brother involved, is he?”

“Yes!” Brutus cried out. “He orchestrated it.”

Alvaro stepped off and roared as Barian beheaded him as a traitor, “You believe me now, Alvaro!”

“The gods will punish me for slaying the emperor!” Alvaro replied. “I got what I came for!”

“Alvaro, look?” Barian pointed to the brown elf coalition marching up as the Elvish legion and the rest, remaining on the battlefield, rallied around Alvaro.

King Aelle pulled out his sword and dropped it at Alvaro's feet, “I wish to surrender now!”

Alvaro picked up and gave it back to him, “Go home with arms, I wish to bypass your lands!”

“Our lands are open, but don’t go to that one village of tears.” Aelle replied.

“I know,” Alvaro replied. “I saw my father walking home sadden after the dark elves war with no further gains than before.”

“I have warned you, now I am off.” Aelle rode off as Barian looked at him.

“Pompous brat, I would have...”

“No,” Alvaro ordered. “Enough bloodshed, we march after we collect the pursuers!”

“Aye sir!” Barian waved for recall as the pursuit died off.

Alvaro’s army marched across the brown elf fields which saw wheat that extended to the horse's eye. Alvaro halted closer to King Aelle’s realm as a rawl was brewing. Alvaro pushed his way through, “What is, Beatrice?”

“Hi old friend,” The elvish girl, fair skinned and blonde hair, pushed her way through. “Your brother cast us mages out, and most fled to West Haven. I am here to request to be your mage like my mother who counseled your father.”

“I can not due to this march, and you should...” Alvaro saw Idril missing. “Aubri, where is the dark elf princess?”

“Gone, I had it with her!” Aubri dismounted her horse. “She left after I accused her of cheating with another man.”

“What?”

Beatrice urged Alvaro to his horse, “Go, she is carrying your child and fled to the village of tears!”

Alvaro jumped on and sped on his horse as Aubri turned to the mage, “What?”

“Shut it, let’s hope that he gets there.” Beatrice mumbled to her goddess of messages. “I pray that Alvaro lived.”

Idril, with two of her maids, fled to a village that seemed friendly. One of her maids spoke, “We should have waited for Selim.”

“I wanted to get away!” Idril cried for a moment. “I hope that Alvaro forgives me.”

The town folk gathered around her and shouted at her with one yelling, “You Dark elf dogs, it’s bad that you slaughtered our sons, but you came to gloat too?”

“No...” Idril could not escape. “I was trying to head home honestly.”

“Liar!” One tried to hit her but got the maid instead who fell conscious.

“Harlot!” Another did likewise.

Idril, alone, pleaded in vain as a bad fruit caused her to kneel down. The dark elf saw a rock heading toward her as a shield came up and blocked it, and Alvaro appeared at Idril’s side while the villagers threw stuff at Alvaro in anger too. Alvaro shielded her best he could, “I should have warned you to not come here.”

“I accept your apology.” Idril could barely move as the pain set in. “I should apologize for getting you into this mess.”

“Kill her and her lover!” A peasant shouted as something loud came crashing down like lightning. Alvaro covered Idril’s ears as another noise came down. A peasant cried, “Avariel, run!”

The village mob fled as winged beings dropped down. Some had two kopis weapons, some had two tazarbin or one with a kopis, and the rest had spears and wore hoplite helmets. Alvaro pulled out his sword which broke on him. In vain, the high elf drew his dagger as placed his wife on his shield and could faintly protect her. Alvaro roared at Alvariel who came closer to him, “Stay back, stay...”

Alvaro got dragged off as one of the Alvariel sheathed his dagger, “She will be fine, relax.”

Alvaro could scarcely relax as his fear increased. His fainting multiplied as he noticed his sword replaced, but unconsciousness took him over as he saw Idril getting looked at by the Alvariel. Alvaro came to consciousness as Idril hugged him, “I thought that you were finished!” “I did too...” Alvaro finally took notice of the sword. “The legend is true!” “What legend?”

Selim rode up alongside Beatrice with a lancer detachment, “I was tired until she woke me and forced me to ride. I regret not coming sooner.”

“I am fine Selim, but can you escort my maids to camp?”

“Certainly!” Selim escorted the maids to camp.

Beatrice smiled, “I found a carriage to take you home, courtesy of King Aelle.” “My horse?”

“It is fine, but you and her need rest.” Beatrice ushered the two into a carriage and climbed up with the driver. “Take us to camp!”

“Who is she?” Idril asked as the carriage started up.

“She’s like an older sister and raised with the royal children.” Alvaro replied. “She was being tutored on being a mage the last time I was here.”

“She does seem like it.” Idril looked at me as she leaned by me.

“I thought that she was gone forever.”

“People are not gone forever.” Idril replied as she fell asleep.

At camp, Alvaro’s men assembled to greet him. Aubri peeked as she saw Alvaro carried Idril to his tent as she was jealous. Alvaro got out as Aubri blurted, “You cheated on me with a Dark...”

Alvaro hushed her for a moment until the servants got to work, “She’s a key and a nice companion in exile.”

“She’s carrying your child!”

“We sort this out Aubrie, and you must not see Idril until then,”

“I thought that we were friends Alvaro.”

“We are which is why I freed you!” Alvaro left Aubrie stunned as he met his council. Everyone was silent and somber as Beatrice came in, “Idril?”

“She and the child will be alright.” The mage looked at the rest, “You need me for something else?”

“No, you may go!” Beatrice bowed and left the group as Alvaro ushered them, “My heir has been announced, but we must march on.”

“Wood elves?” Barian seemed surprised. “Those people hated us.”

“I am playing on the enemy of my enemy, will be my friend.” Alvaro saw no qualms, “Summon Aubrie.”

Aubrie stepped in as she saw Alvaro crossed with her, “You think that she is a key, why?”

“I needed her for the army, but things happened.” Alvaro paused as he drank wine, “Her death would mean a break down with the Quenyan army!”

“While she bares the illegitimate child?” Aubrie was frustrated, “I hoped to wed you and be alone with you, but...”

“You will!” Alvaro snapped, “I want to be alone, and I forgive you for the mess today.”

“I am not a servant that you can use and throw away!” Aubrie got furious, “I am a High elf princess of a feared nation!”

“You are right, but I wish to be alone!” Aubrie cooled and bowed to her love while she left.

Alvaro’s anger subsided as Beatrice entered the room, “I am like my father in wives now!”

“You are different, and these spats will be life.” Beatrice responded, “Idril seemed like a nice gal to not get mixed up in this war.”

“She craves something like adventure!” Alvaro replied, “Have I grown apart from Aubrie?”

“No, she needs time to get over the shock, but Idril still needs you.” Beatrice hinted now, “She’s shook up about the events played out.”

Alvaro nodded and left Beatrice to see Idril. The dark elf tried to speak as Alvaro replied, “I should have been more cautious.”

“What now?”

“You will sleep now.” Idril nodded as Alvaro slept on his bed and smiled at her who replied the same.