

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Sevinarya is having a bad time...

-x-X-x-

The time it takes for them to cut their way to the buzzing communication orb gives the anger, hatred, and loathing plenty of time to build into a raging bonfire inside of her belly. Most of it, admittedly, directed at herself. Gruda, Liselle... everyone. They were all dead. And it was all her fault.

Sevvi had known that already of course, but she'd also thought there was a chance that some of them might still be alive. She'd thought she would have the opportunity to make things right, to save them alongside the human lord and rescue them from the consequences of her actions.

She was wrong. There was no salvation. There was no rescue. There was only vengeance... and even that offered absolutely no satisfaction at this point. The knowledge that the Spider-Queen was dead sat like a lead weight in her gut because ultimately... it solved nothing. They'd killed Liselle's monster sure, but too late for it to have any purpose whatsoever.

As she comes to a stop in front of the buzzing communication orb upon its pedestal outside of her quarters, Sevvi stares at the web-covered thing for a moment. She doesn't want to answer of course... she wants to just ignore the damn thing, turn around, and leave. But... she can't help feeling like she has to tell someone. Someone who will tell her what a fool she's been. Someone who will make it abundantly clear that she's a waste of space and worthless.

... If she can't count on her mother for that, then who can she count on? Letting out a rattling exhale, she picks up the communication orb and answers the call. The Queen's visage appears a moment later, imperious as ever.

"Ah, there you are. You must be more timely about these things my dear-!"

"They're all dead, mother."

Queen Klynirra pauses at that.

"Pardon?"

Saying it the first time had been easy... or maybe she'd just been quick enough. The words stick in her throat the second time, her tongue trying to stick to the roof of her mouth for a moment. But eventually, she forces herself to speak.

"Gruda and all the others... they're dead."

For a long moment, her mother just stares at her in silence. But finally, the Queen makes a curious noise in the back of her throat.

"Well now, that certainly is a development. I hope you don't think I had anything to do with it. I've not sent a single one of my agents in your direction so far."

Sevvi bites back the urge to let out a bark of laughter. Of course she would concern herself with that sort of thing. To be fair, if Sevvi had come back to the hideout one day to find everyone else dead without any obvious cause, she would have assumed it was her mother's doing, almost certainly. But... no.

“I know you didn’t have anything to do with it, mother. It was me. All me.”

That gets an arched brow from the Dark Elf Queen. Klynirra hums as she leans in closer.

“Well now darling, I really didn’t know you had it in you. Grew bored of playing bandits in the woods, did you? I suppose you’ll be coming back then now and-!”

What? No!

“Mother, you’re not listening to me! I didn’t... I didn’t kill them on purpose! They died because of me! It was my *fault!*”

Queen Klynirra leans back at that, visible disappointment flashing across her face before she schools her expression.

“I see. Perhaps you should start from the beginning and actually explain what you’re talking about because at this point you’re not making much sense my dear.”

Sevvi breathes in deep through her mouth and out through her nose, flaring her nostrils. As frustrating as talking to her mother was, the older woman had a point.

“... I pushed Liselle too hard. I needed her to create a monster for me... a mutated giant spider. I needed it fast and so I forced her to cut corners... it blew up in my face. The result was too powerful... uncontrollable.”

Queen Klynirra looks thoughtful for a moment, even tapping her chin with her finger as she hums.

“Liselle... Liselle... that was the one who... no... sorry, I really can’t be asked to keep track of all of your little friends darling. You understand, I’m sure.”

Sevvi bristles, offended on Liselle’s behalf. Then she remembers that she’s the reason the other elf is dead and that she has no right to champion Liselle’s memory at this point and she deflates.

“It doesn’t matter. All that matters is that they’re all dead. Because of me.”

“Ah but *you* survived, didn’t you? Or we wouldn’t be having this conversation now. Most impressive darling, most impressive. Tell me, does the experiment still live? This mutated giant spider sounds quite intriguing?”

Sevvi wrinkles her nose, lip curling in disgust.

“What? No, it’s very, very dead.”

The Queen sighs.

“Shame.”

This time... Sevvi doesn’t deflate. More than a little outraged now, she squeezes down on the communication orb.

“Mother, that thing killed everyone and then laid eggs inside of their bodies. Gruda’s corpse literally spewed spiders out of its mouth at me when I tried to save her!”

That gets her mother’s attention. In fact, Queen Klynirra perks up.

“Oh? So there are offspring? Surely you could collect some of those then right? Do so and bring them back when you return home, please. We could always use more ferocious war beasts.”

... Standing there staring at the orb, Sevvī realizes she really didn’t know what she expected when she answered her mother’s call. She wanted someone who would berate and lambast her for her decision making. Someone who would tell her she was right to hate and loathe herself with every fiber of her being.

Her mother was usually so good at belittling her and even now the Queen was doing so... just not in the right ways. She wasn’t belittling Sevvī for losing every single one of her friends to her own hubris and bad choices. No, she was upset because Sevvī hadn’t tried to take the thing that killed Gruda, Liselle, and all of the others *alive*.

“... I’m not coming back.”

That gets the Queen’s attention. Klynirra’s gaze sharpens as she stares at Sevvī through the communication orb.

“What? Of course you are. It’s over darling, you said it yourself. They’re all dead. What point is there in you staying out there all alone? Just come back and take your place at my side with your sisters. I’m sure they’ll welcome you with open arms. I certainly will.”

Sure. Open arms and a dagger in the back within a week of her return. But frankly... Sevvī would sooner stab herself in the gut and make her own death as painful and drawn out as possible over returning to the Capital. The only reason she hadn’t already done so... was because she was a coward. Even now, after everything she’s done, she’s too afraid of death to do the deed.

Of course, her mother will send someone after her if she insists on staying away. She'll send one of those agents to hunt Sevvī down and bring her back kicking and screaming. Unless...

"I can't come back, mother. I owe a life debt. I am no longer worthy of being called your daughter."

If her previous refusal had gotten the Queen's notice, now she has her mother's full and undivided attention.

"Excuse me?"

Sevvī finds herself speaking in a faint, detached tone. In all honesty, admitting the humiliating, shameful truth to her mother is easier than admitting she got everyone killed.

"I didn't survive Liselle's monster on my own mother. I didn't kill it on my own either. The human I told you about... he saved my life twice over. He's the only reason I still draw breath. And he killed the experiment as well. I owe him a life debt, to spend the rest of my days in service to him and his line. My honor demands it."

Queen Klynirra sneers.

"Fuck honor. You would tie yourself to some human, a male, and his lineage, solely because he fights well?! Don't be ridiculous! You are a Princess of the Royal House of Vairath, Fourth in line for the Throne! You are the daughter of a Queen! You owe NOTHING to some human, no matter what he's done for you!"

The Queen pauses in her ranting and narrows her eyes at Sevvī.

“... I hope you haven’t done anything as foolish as telling *him* about this stupid inclination of yours!”

Slowly, Sevvī turns her head to stare at Thomas. The human lord stands there staring right back at her. He doesn’t look as shocked as she would expect him to be... maybe he’s already reached the limits of his surprise today. He is, however, arching both brows at her.

Flushing slightly, Sevvī looks back to her mother’s face in the orb.

“I’m afraid it will be rather difficult to keep it a secret from him mother... considering he’s standing right here.”

Queen Klynirra sputters. Actually sputters. Sevvī would be delighted if she wasn’t feeling so... burnt out on everything. She’s never seen her mother lose her composure this hard before. But there’s little joy to be had in a moment like this, given everything that had to happen to lead them here.

“You listen to me, Sevinarya! You will *not* swear a life debt or oath of service to a human male. You will return to the Capital immediately or I swear I will-!”

The sheer vitriol in her mother’s voice had Sevvī’s ears pinning back along her skull. So focused on the Queen’s words, she doesn’t even notice Thomas until he’s already reached out and plucked the communication orb from her hands.

When he does, however, her mother cuts off mid-sentence in shock and even Sevvī looks at him with wide eyes, confused at what he’s doing. The human lord, meanwhile, turns the orb so he’s looking right at her mother, his face set in stone.

“Too late, I’m afraid. Your daughter has already sworn her oath... and I have acknowledged her life debt and accepted her into my service. She is mine now... and there is *nothing* you can do about it.”

Silence reigns as Sevvī just stares at Thomas. Not only are her eyes wide, but her mouth is also open as well. He... what is he doing? She’s done no such thing... and yet, he’s standing up to her mother for her anyways. He’s talking back to the Queen of all the Dark Elves! For her!

“... Give the orb back to my daughter, human.”

Thomas looks to Sevvī then and arches a brow. Rather than immediately obey her mother’s orders, he waits to see if she’s willing to accept it back. That, Sevvī knows, is probably infuriating the Queen all the more. Still, in the end she nods and holds out her hands, taking the communication orb back from Thomas and looking at her mother again.

Queen Klynirra stares back at her, face set in stone and eyes icy.

“You are right. You are no longer worthy of being my daughter. From this day forth, the Royal House of Vairath knows no daughter by the name Sevinarya. You are Sevinarya of No House. Sevinarya of Nowhere.”

And then, just like that, the call is ended from her mother’s end. Or rather, from the Queen’s end... not her mother anymore, after all. Sevvī stares for a long moment, holding her breath as if she’s expecting for her mother to call back and reverse course, still demanding her return.

But... no. There’s nothing. The orb remains silent, as does the hallway they’re standing in outside of her quarters. Slowly, carefully, Sevvī puts it

back on its pedestal and steps away from it. She feels... she doesn't know how to feel.

For decades now, she's wanted nothing more than to be disowned. To be able to escape the Royal House, to no longer be a Vairath. Escaping her bloodline with her life... it had always felt impossible.

And then... the plan. Her and Gruda, all of their late night sessions plotting out their escape. Gathering likeminded young elven women to their cause, scheming under the noses of all of their families. Those first few days after fleeing the Capital and disappearing into the Darkwoods had been the happiest days of Sevv's life.

Then Gruda had come to her with the orb and her confession and Sevv... Sevv had realized there was still a noose around her neck. Everything after that had been tainted. Corrupted by her mother's ever-present touch. And she'd let it taint her too. She'd continued thinking like she was back in the Capital. From her dealings with the humans... to her treatment of her people.

Now here she stood, finally free of it all. But the cost was Gruda, Liselle, and all the others. And it was too damn high. It was a cost she didn't want to pay... a cost she'd had no right to pay. She had everything she wanted... but at a price she never could have fathomed.

"Sevinarya..."

Thomas' voice cuts through her rambling thoughts like a knife and she turns to look at him for a long, wordless moment.

"... Will you kill me?"

She doesn't quite ask it like she wants it... but there's no fear in her voice either. It's a simple question spoken in a simple, questioning tone. Thomas pauses for a moment, staring at her assessingly... before finally shaking his head.

"No. I'm not going to kill you."

Sevvi nods... and then drops to a knee, bowing her head and holding her curved daggers along her forearms as she lifts them aloft.

"My life is yours regardless. From this day onward I serve you and your line. Your children and your children's children and so on and so forth... all shall know they can call upon me and use me in any way they see fit. Just as you may. You are my Master now."

Silence reigns for a long moment until she finally lifts her head. Thomas doesn't look happy... if anything, he looks stricken as he grimaces down at her.

"And if I don't want a slave?"

Sevvi grunts.

"Then send me away. Whether to complete tasks for you or to fight monsters in your name until I fall... put before me whatever demand you have and I will strive to complete it or die trying."

Another silence. And then...

"No. You'll come back with me. You committed crimes against Last Hope. Extortion... and the King of the Forest was you too, wasn't it?"

“... Yes.”

No point in denying it anymore. Not any of it.

“Right. You owe Last Hope some service at the very least. You can start your penance by helping out around there. We’ll figure out next steps later.”

He sounds tired. Sevvì doesn’t blame him, she feels tired. Of course, before anything else...

“... Though I have no right to do so, I must ask that we finish cleansing this place of that monstrosity’s offspring before we go. Please.”

Thomas’ eyes slide away from her, down the hallway to where all of the Spider-Queen’s children had fled. To be fair, there’s no exit out of the hideout that they could have found unless they developed the ability to burrow... but Sevvì doesn’t want to risk it anyways. Fortunately, after a moment the human nods.

“You’re right. We’ll have to be careful though. The fire will suck up all of the oxygen quickly.”

Oxygen? Was that another human word for air? Regardless, he’s right... the hideout is completely sealed, with fresh air provided for by magical devices. And while Sevvì wouldn’t mind if she accidentally sacrificed herself in her friends’ funeral pyre... she has to make sure Thomas Marlow survives at all costs. After all, he is her Master now... whether he likes it or not.

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A/N: Well now, at this point in time I'm curious... do people still wish Sevvie had died/wasn't eventually joining the harem? Or is there an inkling of something worthwhile here now that she's hit rock bottom?

Please let me know what you think either on Patreon or Discord! Your feedback, suggestions, and ideas for this story are keeping the inspiration flowing in a big way!