

I followed Serana through the castle, before she shoved open a large set of doors. Inside was what I could only assume was a ruined cathedral, the regular shrine replaced with one to Molag Bal - and Harkon, in his Vampire Lord form, hovering in the center of the room. I stiffened on instinct. Serana narrowed her eyes, gripping her dagger tightly.

"Serana, my darling," Harkon said, and I felt bile rise in my throat. His gaze turned to me. "I see you still favor keeping a pet."

Serana didn't take any of the bait. "You know why we're here."

"Of course I do," Harkon said. "You disappoint me, Serana. You've taken everything I provided for you and threw it away for this..." He sneered at me. "Pathetic, filthy lycanthrope."

I felt my own blood begin to boil - not just at the insults, but at what he was trying to do. *Don't listen to him Serana, he's just-*

But she was already ahead of me. She bared her teeth. "Provided for me? Are you insane?"

Harkon already seemed taken aback, but she continued.

"You've destroyed our family," Serana said. "You've killed other vampires, all over some prophecy that we barely understand. No more. I'm done with you." Then, she stepped in front of me, standing tall. "You will *not* touch her."

"So, I see this dragon has fangs," Harkon drolled. "Your voice drips with the venom of your mother's influence." He gave us everything short of a sneer. "How alike you've become."

"No," Serana said, her voice even and steady. "Because unlike her, I'm not afraid of you. Not anymore."

Internally, my heart was doing somersaults and I was clapping for her. *You tell him! You're a badass! Give him what he deserves!*

Harkon looked over Serana's shoulder to me. "And you..."

I waltzed up next to Serana, giving Harkon a vicious grin. "Yes? What about me?"

"It appears I have you to thank for turning my daughter against me," He said. "I knew it was only a matter of time before she returned with hatred in her heart."

I was done being anywhere near nice, even in the name of sarcasm. I let a growl bubble up in my throat. "Hatred born of your neglect."

I felt Serana's knuckles brush against my own, before she put her hand in mine. I squeezed it gently. *I'm here. I'm right here, Serana. We're in this together.*

Harkon just lifted his chin. "A small price to pay for the betterment of our kind."

I snarled. "Your kind is a blight on this world!"

Harkon gave a bitter chuckle. "Ah yes, always the noble vampire hunter, seeking to rid us from the world. Is Serana next? Is-"

"No," I cut him off, the fury rising up in my chest almost too much to bear. "*You*. The men who think they deserve everything simply because they have power. The men who rip apart anything for their own greed. The men who would dare to sacrifice daughters and wives for their own ambitions. *You-*" I pointed one finger at him. "Are the blight. And I am here to purge."

He narrowed his eyes. "And what makes you think you are so high and mighty?"

"*I'm the Dragonborn!*" I said, throwing out my arms. "I have spat in the face of your lord! I am a goddamn legend, and you will be a single story in my tale. You are nothing. You won't be remembered when this is over. They'll remember me-" I pointed at myself. "Tallulah Moonstep. The name 'Harkon Volkihar' will merely be in a list of those I've defeated."

I felt myself begin to tremble now, my fury bursting at the seams. "I wouldn't *dare* to think of hurting Serana. To hurt her, I'd have to lose my mind a thousand times over. She is a thousand times the person you could ever *dream* to be."

I felt Serana squeeze my hand. So many words bubbled up, so many insults and remarks, but Harkon spoke before I did.

"I see," He said, his voice carefully neutral. "Then my daughter is truly lost. She died the moment she accepted such an animal into her life."

I saw red. "*She died the moment you abandoned her!*"

My draconic soul flared, begging for an outlet and to incinerate him. I grabbed my warhammer with white knuckles.

"Enough of this!" I roared.

"Yes, quite," Harkon drawled on. "I'm growing weary of talking to you and my traitorous daughter. I'll give you a single chance to turn over the bow. There will not be a second."

"Oh, of course," I said, my voice dripping with as much sarcasm as I could muster. I took out the bow, nocking an arrow and firing it straight at him. He dodged it, just barely, a thin line of blood across the ashy skin.

I let out another snarl, my inner wolf threatening to take over. "*I'll show you just what this filth in my blood can do!*"

I lunged, raking my claws at him, but a swarm of bats surrounded me instead, before Harkon reformed on the other side. Serana was in front of me in an instant, a crackling barrier surrounding us as I got to my feet.

"He'll summon gargoyles," Serana said, ducking under a bolt of lightning from him. "And probably skeletons. I can keep them busy, you need to work on him."

The weight of my warhammer was comforting, almost. "With pleasure." I reared my head back, sneering at him as he was perched on the balcony. "Too scared to come and face me head on?"

He hissed, leaping down with claws bared. I blocked with my warhammer as best I could, but I could feel a cut along my face. I heard Serana grunt behind me, followed by the sound of rattling bones.

Harkon flapped his stunted wings, pushing away from me and summoning a thin spike of ice. "I will darken the skies!" He shouted, sending the spike towards me. I just barely managed to block it, a few stray shards of ice embedding themselves in my fur.

I shook the remaining frost from my fur, charging with my warhammer and slamming it down. Harkon caught it mid-air, tossing me aside.

"Alright then, let's see how you enjoy this," I said, spitting blood from my mouth. I drew Auriel's Bow, nocking one of the Sunhallowed arrows. "Serana, duck!"

Serana dug her dagger into the shoulder of a gargoyle, ducking behind a pillar a split second before I fired the arrow. I shielded my eyes from the sunburst, and I heard Harkon roar in pain.

From behind the pillar, Serana's eyes widened. "Tallu, look out!"

Harkon slammed into me, knocking the air out of my lungs and sending me sprawling to the ground. He hissed, eyes trained on my neck, before a bolt of lightning struck his back and he reared up. A swarm of bats covered my vision before Harkon reappeared by the shrine of Molag Bal, fangs bared.

"You turned her against me!" He howled.

"You were doing a pretty fine job of that yourself!" I shouted back, nocking another arrow. The sunburst lit up the entire cathedral, Harkon roaring.

He turned into a swarm of bats again, this time hovering above the shrine, a dark energy surrounding him. I coughed up blood, my legs threatening to give out from under me. *Damn, this is some sort of vampiric drain on steroids.*

"The bow!" Serana shouted, barely audible over the roar of magic. "Use the bow!"

Hands shaking, I drew the bow back, another sunburst lighting up the room. The magic dissipated, with Harkon knelt on the ground. He snarled, and with a flap of his wings he was airborne again, gathering red magic in his hands.

I took my warhammer again, charging at him, but this time head-on. Just when he prepared to block it, I ducked, swinging at his knee. It hit, the sound of bones cracking rang out, and Harkon hissed, clawing at me. Talons raked across my face and I stumbled, but not before heat gathered in my throat and I Shouted fire back at him.

I ducked behind a pillar, sloppily chugging a potion before leaping onto the gargoyle that was pestering Serana, then turning my attention back to Harkon.

"I'll drain the life from you!" He hollered, shooting a beam of blood-red magic at me. I coughed up more blood into my mouth, firing another Sunhallowed arrow at him. In the blink of an eye, he was back over the shrine.

"Nice try, but the same trick doesn't work twice," I muttered, lining up my shot. Another sunburst. This time, I felt the heat singe my fur.

Harkon met my eyes, pure fury blazing behind them. "*Die, you fool!*" With frightening speed, he charged at me, throwing me to the ground. Stars danced in my vision, and I reached for the bow-

The bow. It was across the room, and *wait, I'm still on the ground-!*

I pushed myself up, but a sudden, sharp pain in my side slowed me down. Blood soaked through my armor. *Damnit, move faster!*

I watched in horror Harkon grabbed the bow, a mad gleam in his eyes. The healing spell in my hands flickered, not working nearly fast enough. Serana grit her teeth, summoning a lightning bolt, before Harkon charged at her too, lifting her up by the throat. He shot me a look that nearly stopped my heart right there.

"I will feast on your blood in Molag Bal's honor," He said, then he turned his gaze to Serana, still struggling against his grip. "And Serana will sacrifice her blood for the sake of the prophecy!"

*No. No, you can't do that, stop it-!*

Serana, lifted off the ground, kicked and writhed in his grip as he lifted one of his clawed hands. Harkon was relishing the moment, a wicked grin on his face.

*Get up, damn it!* The pain in my side persisted, the loss of blood almost dizzying.

"Darling daughter," Harkon said. "Vampires all over Tamriel will thank you. They will remember your sacrifice this day."

Serana could barely even choke out a syllable. Clawing at her father's hands around her neck, she looked at me out of the corner of her eye-

She was crying.

Tears were welling up in her eyes, fear written into every inch of her face, pleading. I had seen her when we confronted her mother, when we talked about our pasts- and not once. Not once had I ever seen her in terror like that.

My vision went red once more. I roared, a bestial, *draconic* roar, the kind that echoed in the room and shook the marrow of my bones. Every ounce of me pulsed with power, too much for a single mortal body, like the very fabric of my being was beginning to unravel.

*No. No, I've lost enough. I'm can't lose her-!*

I remembered the dragon I met in the Elder Scroll. That arrogant bastard was right. I sure as hell have something to fight for.

I lunged, every ounce of caution abandoning me. *"Let her go!"*

Then, internally: *I'm not losing the woman I love!*