

~ Day 73 ~

I wanted to protest the craziness of the legend, however, I realized that after all that I've seen, this was honestly more than possible.

"From your explanations, information about the outside world and things like these legends are extremely valuable and guarded close like as if treasure, but how come you seem so knowledgeable? You said you were from some prestigious family, but you haven't explained further than that." - Me

Although Lily had a lot of experience in controlling and hiding her emotions behind a veil of either indifference or teasing, it didn't escape my eyes the slight tension in her shoulders when I mentioned her family. It was without a doubt a sore spot for her, and I immediately regretted asking her.

Like her usual self, acting like nothing was wrong, she strolled up to me. Trailing a teasing finger across my chest, she walked past me. Meeting my sorry gaze, she chuckled.

"What - isn't a woman allowed to keep their secrets anymore?" - Lily

I choked on the apology I was about to voice as Lily stuffed my own words down my throat. Salaciously swaying her hips while she walked away, giving me an eyeful, I could only shake my head ruefully. Sensing Mia's approach, I saw her looking back and forth between me and Lily.

Suddenly feeling guilty and embarrassed by the obvious flirtation between Lily and me, I was once again about to apologize to another woman, only to swallow my words before I could even say anything.

"Master, when are you going to take her as your woman?" - Mia

What Mia had said came completely out of left field, and I hadn't been prepared for it even in the slightest. I've yet to have the talk with Mia about bringing other women into the relationship since I was honestly scared by how Mia might react to it. But seeing how absolutely nonchalantly she had asked me that question like it was simply asking what was for dinner, I couldn't find the words to say.

"Are you okay Master?" - Mia

She said, a bit worried at my lack of response. Pulled from my stupor, I faked coughed, trying to regain my bearings.

"Um, take her as my woman? You don't mind sharing me with another?" - Me

Now it was Mia's turn to be confused, her cute eyebrows scrunching together in befuddlement.

"What do you mean Master? Why would I mind it? Honestly, I was getting a bit worried that you've only claimed one woman up until now. You definitely have the stamina to keep up more than one, so is something else wrong Master?" - Mia

"Uhh - no, nothing's wrong. Well, you really won't become jealous if I took another woman?" - Me

"Why would I be jealous? Will you love me less if you had another woman?" - Mia

I shook my head a bit dumbfoundedly.

"Then, stupid Master, look at Bob, he already has seven wives." - Mia

Waving to the side, she indicated the large figure of Bob talking with a group of hobgoblin females, two of them even some of the few orcs we had in the tribe. I had already seen them together before, but I hadn't known they were Bob's women. It would definitely explain why he was gone so often, having to take *care* of seven women on his own and all.

It was then it dawned on me that I was looking at all of this from the perspective of my previous human life. The idea of polygamy to someone like the former greenskin, Mia, was probably not only the norm but also expected. I didn't win Mia's love and affection by romantically courting my way into her heart, so why did I still hang on to these useless notions.

"(Sigh), you're right." - Me

"Of course I am." - Mia

She said haughtily, personality once again taking a swing in the opposite direction of her shy and loving demeanor. Grinning at the oddball that was the beautiful girl in front of me, I pulled her into my embrace and kissed the top of her head affectionately.

"Well, I'm not sure if she wants to be 'my woman'." - Me

"Oh? Does she not recognize your strength yet? Hmm, let's see... Ah, yeah! - just show her your power as you did with me that once time or challenge her to a duel. Then, she'll surely be yours!" - Mia

"Ah, I do appreciate the enthusiasm. But humans don't really work that way." - Me

It was obvious that Mia was about to come up with a slew of reasons why this method would work, but I silenced her with a deep and heated kiss.

"Thank you, for everything. No matter what, or how many women I might end up with, I will always love you. My first woman." - Me

Melting in my brace, her ears reddened with both happiness and embarrassment by the sudden declaration of her place in my heart.

"And about that *stamina* you mentioned. How about we test out just how far we can take it? It would be... *good* to test out such things before bringing other women into the fold, don't you think?" - Me

Turning a whole shade redder, Mia nodded almost imperceptibly, her face buried in my chest as her embarrassment flared.

"Hehe - my little nymph." - Me

"Reaver squad to the rear!" - Darkan

Immediately following his commands, a whole slew of agile sword-wielding hobgoblins all stormed to face a huge crocodile that emerged from the murky waters. Everywhere, greenskins were fighting these huge reptiles, and with Lily standing at my side, we calmly watched over the scene.

There weren't many of these car-sized crocodiles, and the battles were in control. Mia using her magic if anything went wrong, Me at the ready if any squad suddenly needed help, and Bob as covering support. With the coordinated efforts of the hunting leaders, and Mia doing damage control with her immensely useful magic, not a single soul was lost. And before long, the last crocodile was put down.

With that, we finally pushed through the last stretch of muddy marshes, allowing us all to let out a collective groan of exhaustion. Another three days had passed, however, we hadn't managed to make much headway in this time. After making our way through the mountainous and canyon-filled landscape we were met with a large expanse of flat marshes.

In truth, these marshes weren't really all that big, but having to travel through them caused a whole slew of problems that would constantly slow down our entourage. From the muddy ground and water, we faced no small amount of trouble getting the carriages to move as they would get constantly jammed and hindered by the unforgiving terrain.

But that was just the least of our problems. With the constant onslaught of everything the marshes had to offer, we were kept on our toes at all times. From swarms of dog-sized water-skittling insects to giant crocodiles hiding beneath the water, there was always something to try and take a bite out of us.

There were even other greenskins inhabiting these blasted marshes, however, they were no ordinary greenskins. Attacking us on sight, these greenskins were all of the stealthy types, hiding the terrain, only to pop out and fire various poisonous projectiles at our people. If not for the fact that my blood contained extreme vitality, enough to stout off most foreign and poisonous substances, I doubted that less than half of the entire caravan would've been left.

But that wasn't to say that we got nothing out of the hardships. With the continuous influx of enemies, there was an equal amount of EXP flooding into my warriors and followers. By now, a great deal of the hobgoblins who embarked on this journey with me had hit the threshold, ready to evolve.

Even Rena and Grul, the two strongest of my orcs were ready to evolve. During the fights, I had mostly been the one to take on the enemies that were too tricky to deal with or those who were the kingpins of the areas, so even I had managed to scrounge up two levels. Actually, I had been quite disappointed that it was only two levels I had managed since the number of slain enemies that I had mowed through that last couple of days was nothing to scoff at.

But it just proved how much harder it would become in the future to grow in strength. Well, although many of my warriors had become eligible for evolution, I hadn't allowed them to go through with it yet. Mostly due to the fact that we didn't have any time to camp or rest in these damnable marshes.

I wasn't kidding when I said it was a constant onslaught of enemies. One day in, we had decided to camp, but that proved to be a grave mistake as a deluge of enemies, seemingly from nowhere, suddenly attacked us from all sides. That was the reason why I was looking at five hundred greenskins instead of six hundred.

In that ambush, we had lost a full one hundred strong hobgoblins and five orcs. If not for the fact that my senses alerted me to the ambush before it would've turned disastrous, we would've lost a lot more. As such, ever since then, we had been in a constant push to exit the marshes.

With two days straight of marching through the inhospitable marshes, everybody was thoroughly spent. Only because of the enhanced and strengthened physique that stats and attributes gave greenskins did we manage. Standing at the foot of a large hill or cliff, we couldn't really see what laid beyond, but now that we were finally out of the marshes, we could rest. We had to rest.

So without any further ado, I gave the orders, and a camp was quickly erected. After having allowed some rest for the wearier of the greenskins, I assembled all the ones who were at the precipice of evolving. In front of me, stood one hundred and thirty hobgoblins, and three orcs.

Looking at the Minor Crimson Cores in my palm, I smiled deviously.

It was about time my force experienced a boost in their power.