

The impossible couple

Elanor and Maëri approached the abandoned campsite hand in hand. There was no one in sight. Only scavenger birds were fighting for the leftover food, squeaking at each other.

I don't like that, Maëri thought. It should not be empty. We have tracked this platoon for two days. They can't disappear like that.

Could it be Grovethrive? Elanor asked. They both shared a feeling of dread. She turned to face her husband, a handsome human with soft caramel skin and lovely hazel eyes. *No, he should be on the front, far to the Mountain right,* she thought.

They skimmed through the camp, never letting go of the other's hand, wary of any danger. *Strange, everything is there, just the soldiers are missing.* Maëri kneeled and touched a soldier's bedroll. *Still warm—whatever happened, happened recently.* They stopped in front of the lieutenant's tent, the only covered accommodation. *Let's hope we will find what we're looking for.*

They entered; it was rudimentary: a bedroll, a chair and a table. She went through the documents on the table while he kept watch. *I found notes but they are ciphared, I think—*

Listen...

Maëri froze, all was silent, too silent, no more birds squeaking. *We've been trapped.*

Behind, bedroll, soldier! Maëri blocked the incoming strike with her sword using the image shared by Elanor through their digipathy.

Oxis, quick! he ordered his second life.

Oxis crawled from his shirt to infuse the blade. Elanor thrust his sword forward, which expanded in a flash, piercing the soldier-bedroll through the heart.

The bedrolls, really? Maëri thought.

At least, it worked, he answered. *They must have seen us coming and set up the trap. We must be surrounded by now. Whirlwind?*

Yes, Maëri answered, quickly catching the cyphered documents.

Oxis ready yourself for the big show, Elanor told.

They positioned themselves in the center of the tent. She firmly held his hand and started rotating on her feet. Gaining momentum Elanor rose from the ground while she did counterweight. He extended his sword, which stretched out as they whirled faster, it pierced the tent, cutting through the fabric. It expanded further—thinner and deadlier. They heard screams as it cut through several enemies outside.

Oxis, stop, the tent is falling on us.

His blade downsized as Oxis escaped the weapon and hid himself again inside Elanor clothes. Maëri extended an arm above them, palm open.

That's your turn Kenös, rid us of the tent! Maëri thought.

She focused and felt the energy being drawn from her and the whole fabric shrank into a small void pocket growing between her palms.

Their enemies were now visible. She threw the compacted tent to a troll's surprised face who found himself buried under an expanding tent.

I can see a dozen bodies on the floor but we're still largely outnumbered. They continued to turn around, hand in hand,

two pairs of eyes watching their surroundings. They were twenty-six Family's soldiers: nine elves, eight orcs, six humans and three trolls.

We have known worse odds, Elanor thought.

The soldiers drew their bows.

I take care of that, you cut us a way out of here, Maëri thought.

The soldiers shot.

Kenös, to you, she thought.

A multitude of void pockets appeared in the air which drained more of her energy. They instantaneously imploded, sucking the environment air in deafening bursts. The deflected arrows struck the soldiers, five of them fell on the ground.

Twenty-one left.

While they retrieved possession of their senses, Elanor killed another six of them with precise extended thrusts.

Fifteen.

The rest of them abandoned their bows and charged. He killed another two before they reached them. *Thirteen.*

Elanor and Maëri started dancing, hand in hand. *Left.* He blocked the hit, she cut the orc on the neck. *Twelve. Top.* They both crouched to avoid a troll's warhammer swing which ended its way into the face of another soldier. *Eleven.* She plunged her sword into the troll groin. *Ten. Right.*

Too late. Maëri felt the blade hit her rib cage. Elanor killed the assailant with another thrust through the thorax. *Nine.*

Protect your head! she urged him while lowering her own. She raised her arms protecting her ears.

Kenös, big one please!

Maëri drew upon all her energy and created a one-foot void pocket. It imploded in a thunderous clap, they felt the shock wave through their bodies and its blow on the ground.

She was exhausted, Elanor helped her stand up. It was a gruesome scenery, the soldiers' faces were in shreds, some of them had their eyes rooted out, others had patches of skin nearly attached to the face. *None left.*

We must leave this place, you need to rest, Elanor thought.

Yes, we got the cypher, that's what we came for. Beloved, you will have to carry me, I—

She fell but he caught her in his arms. They left the camp, leaving forty bodies to the scavengers.

It was the third year of the Last War, which opposed the Family and the Association. She was an elf, daughter of the Family's chief counselor, and he was an human, heir to the City throne. They were the impossible couple.