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Story by Paul Michaels

I Got Isekai'd! Well Shyt!

Chapter 171 I Believe We Should Hire the Mercs

Alaric was shell-shocked and his son didn't know what to do after seeing his father in such a state. They knew they had to do something, but what could they do?

'My idiot of a son was careless again!... I told him time, after time to be patient, and let your enemy develop a false sense of security. But he couldn't control himself and put our family in danger. We need to come up with a plan... No... I'm the one who needs to come up with the strategy.'

William and Alistar came walking up to Alaric who was standing there not responding to anyone around him. They have seen this look before. It was the same look he had ten years ago when his assassin betrayed him. When she sided with the crown.

"Alaric, are you alright?" William asked with a bit of unease in his voice.

He didn't respond. Marcus took that as his queue to get out of there. He didn't want to be near his father when he was like this. And when he was about to leave he heard his father's voice.

"Where do you think you're going?" Alaric said in a deep voice laced with a hint of venom.

Marcus's face turned white. "Umm... I-I was going to take a walk..."

"Come with me," Alaric ordered as he turned on his heels and started walking towards the direction of his study.

Marcus gulped, "Yes, father."

William chimed in, "Do you wish for us to join you?"

"No... You and Alistair can keep enjoying yourselves. I'll speak with you later once I have an idea of what to do."

"As you wish," William said as he stopped walking beside the duke.

Alaric walked away with his son towards his study. He was furious with his son, but he didn't want everyone at the party to see him belittling his son out in the open. It didn't take long before they arrived at the door to Alaric's study.

Belial was in the study cleaning things up since his master was at the party. He also got a few reports from his spies that he sent to watch what was going on, in the Northeast. There was a report that the Kingdom of Marn had been at war with the Wood Elves. That no one knew about. He was hoping to find out how that battle ended.

Just as he finished straightening up the desk, he saw a raven flying through the window.

"Well, what are the odds of you showing up now?"

The raven landed on the chair that was in front of the desk and cawed.

"Hmmm. Let's see what message you have for me."

He walked over to the raven and grabbed the small scroll that was tied to its leg. He unfurled it and read the letter.

Dear B,

I have found that the Wood Elves have been conquered by the Kingdom of Marn. Their people have been enslaved.

For what reason, I have no answer yet.

But they hired an infamous mercenary group called the Black Roses.

It seems they are on the run from King Arnaud Dupont. Due to a fear of the Black Roses claiming the throne.

The Mercenaries have been moving closer to the Kingdom's borders.

I'll give you more details when I find them.

-C.

'I see... They might be usef—'

Click!

Belial saw the door to Alaric's Study open. Alaric was walking in while dragging his son behind him. Belial immediately hid himself.

"F-Father."

"What am I going to do with you?"

"I-It was foolproof, father. I promise."

"Shut it! Just shut up... How could you be so reckless?! You exposed us to the King... The KING!!!"

"I know, father... But—"

"But what?!"

Marcus couldn't answer that question. He couldn't think of an answer.

"I-I..."

"Nothing! Absolutely nothing!"

"I-I'm sorry, father..."

"Shut up! I need to think..."

Alaric paced back and forth for a few minutes while his son stood there scared and confused.

"What am I going to do now, father? What about our families? Will we have to run?"

"Cyndre doesn't want a revolt at the moment but that could change... We need a plan that won't make the kingdom go to war, but the plan should help us get rid of that cursed prince."

"I've got an idea, father."

"Another idea? No! I'm the one with the ideas... You're the one that has undercooked plans that blow up in your face," Alaric hissed.

Marcus gritted his teeth. He was furious with his father and more importantly, his cousin.

Belial was watching this and decided to make his presence known.

"Pardon me, my lord."

Alaric turned quickly to the voice. While Marcus's face was filled with shock.

"Belial? How dare you eavesdrop on me and my son. What are you doing here?!"

"Forgive me, my lord. I didn't mean to. I was simply finishing up some work and was cleaning this chamber."

"Then why didn't you leave?"

"Well... One of my men set a messenger raven and it just came into the study right before my lord came into the room. I was planning on coming by the party to give it to you." Belial held out his hand that had the small piece of parchment.

"Is that so?" Alaric said as he was eyeing his butler.

"Yes, my lord."

"And?"

"I think it can help with our situation."

"Tell me," Alaric demanded with impatience in his voice.

Belial walked closer before speaking.

"There is a group of mercenaries that are in need of a job. If I'm correct, we can use them."

"How do you know about these mercenaries? And what do they have to do with this?" Alaric asked impatiently.

"This group is the Black Roses, my Lord..."

Alaric became interested immediately as the annoyance on his face turned into intrigue.

"The Black Roses?... I thought they were fighting a war north of the Kingdom of Marn. What in the three hells are they doing down here?" Alaric asked out loud as he was pondering.

"They were hired by King Arnaud Dupont to fight in a war with the Wood Elves... But it seems they have outlived their usefulness and he fears they will overthrow him."

"Tsk! That sounds like Arnaud."

"My lord?"

"Continue..."

"Well, the other reports I've been receiving have stated that a higher amount of goblins are coming out of the Labyrinth called The Tomb of the Horde... It's by the city of Ironside... And at some point, the Dungeon Core will need to be dealt with..."

Alaric started realizing what they could do.

"Yes... Yes! That's it!... You've done well, Belial. This is perfect. But we will have to make sure we can negotiate with Rudolf Rose... If we can't get them, then this will all be for nothing."

Marcus was feeling left out of the discussion and wanted to know what his father's scheme was.

"Father, what's the plan?"

Alaric looked at his son, who looked uncomfortable.

"It's going to be complex, but the main goal is to discredit the Royal Family and make them look incompetent in the eyes of all the nobles. We will accomplish this by finding the Dungeon Core and we will send you to destroy it."

"Me? But I don't know how—"

"Quiet!... We will hire the Black Roses to be your custodians and you will use them to clear the way. And if there's a chance to kill Quinus then do so... But it's more important that you beat him to the final floor. So you can destroy the Dungeon Core and bring shame onto the Royal Family."

"So... You're going to let me use the Eldrathil Dungeonseker to find the Dungeon Core?"

"Yes... But there's a catch. If you fail me, I'll personally execute you. Do you understand me?"

"Y-Yes, father," Marcus quickly nodded his head.

"Hm!" Alaric snorted at his son.

Then the Duke walked over to his desk and grabbed a piece of paper. "Belial, do you have any idea on the time frame of the monster stampede?"

"My sources say that it will happen within a decade. Give or take a few years."

"Hmm. That's enough time."

"Enough time for what, father?"

"We will start spreading rumors to the nobles about the royal family's failure to protect the kingdom from foreign migrants and demi-humans. We also need to turn the citizens against them. But none of these rumors can't be spread by anyone close to our faction."

"Oh! I know one of Quinus's weaknesses! He cares for the people. He thinks he can help them. That idiot could have used them to his advantage. But no! He's weak! And-"

"Marcus..."

"Huh? Oh! Sorry, father."

"Anyway... We can't have the rumors spread by anyone from the inner circle... I'll need some time to think on this... Belial, tell me when the Black Roses are close enough to the kingdom. We will make contact with them to negotiate the terms of service. Also, I want you to have your people keep an eye out on the city that is closest to the labyrinth."

"I believe it's the village of Kishin. I'll send a message as soon as possible, my Lord."

"Good. Marcus, I'll speak with you later. And remember what I told you."

"Yes, father."

"Oh, and Marcus?"

"Yes, father?"

"You are not allowed to see or talk to Quinus alone until this plan is set into motion. And do not speak of this to anyone."

"Y-Yes, father..."

Marcus then stormed out the door and slammed it shut. Alaric was left thinking about his next moves and Belial was thinking about how the Black Roses will have no other choice but to accept this job.

And so the years went by as Quinus was busy working on a few infrastructure projects to help the commoners. He started building an aqueduct system that was made by using a type of cement that he made from mixing ash, limestone, and volcanic rock. He started digging deep underground and had the mages create a mana well to produce water and the workers built a pipeline that led to the castle and the city's center. The city was now getting more clean water for everyone to use. He also had some people gather up all the horse manure, compost it, and sell it to the farmers.

There were a few minor nobles who were getting furious that the prince was spending money on the citizens, instead of them.

Prime Minister Duval was able to secure an arranged marriage for Crown Prince Quinus in hopes of getting a peace agreement with the Alliance of the Divine Three. Duke Alaric was able to negotiate with the Black Roses, but they wanted something more than money for their services. Rudolf wanted to become a Baron of a territory. So, Alaric agreed they could have Ironside if the monster stampede was dealt with and Marcus became the next heir of Fiafyr. Rudolf wasn't trusting of Alaric but he let Marcus have 30 of his better men to be his bodyguards.

Quinus didn't like the idea of an arranged marriage but he knew it was his duty to help his kingdom and he didn't have a choice. Percy took Sir George's courtship advice as he laid eyes on Bell. Percy thought she was the one from the Keeper's prophecy and he needed help to get her attention.

Quinus warned him but he thought Sir George's advice was in his best interest and he thought the prince had it easy since he already had a fiance. So, he used all the methods Sir George taught him. And it only made things go from bad to worse. Bell ended up telling him that she wasn't into boys and then she warned all the other young ladies to stay away from him because he was acting like a creep. It broke him that he failed to get the love of his life and never thought he would find true love ever again.

It took almost a decade before the monster stampede was supposed to occur. It was just a matter of time as the minor nobles demanded that the Royal Family do something about it. King Cyndre wanted to go but the nobles wanted the crown prince to lead the army into the Labyrinth to see if he was worthy of being the next in line.

The smear campaign against Quinus was working and the king was losing the favor of most of the minor nobles. But the smear campaign wasn't working on the citizens. Through all his years of working and building things, Quinus was winning over the people with every new innovation he's been building for them. Which resulted in improving their lives to such a degree, that the common folk started looking up to him and saw him as the next king.

So, after a decade had passed, reports about a monster stampede occurring at the tomb were becoming a concern that not even the Adventurer's Guild was able to handle the influx of monsters. The nobles wanted the prince to fix the problem. So, the crown prince, his cousin Marcus, 20 Royal Knights, and 30 of the Black Roses' soldiers were sent to Ironside before heading to Kishin.

The day has come for the Crown Prince to go on his first dungeon dive. Quinus knew it was going to be difficult and he reluctantly accepted his cousin's help because of their family artifact that can find the Dungeon Core. He knew his Uncle and Cousin were plotting something, but he needed to save the people and that's what was important.

Quinus, Sir George, Percy, and his 20 Royal Knights rode through the village of Kishin before arriving at the outskirts. They were all in full plate armor and were prepared to fight off anything

that was coming out of the forest. He was confident in his men and himself. He trained them all hard to make sure they were prepared for anything.

So their journey to save Ironside and the surrounding villages and towns has just begun.

To Be Continued...

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