

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

A/N: More Sevv! Poor Liselle v.v

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“Liselle! I want an update!”

Sevvi can immediately tell from the way the other Dark Elf’s shoulders hunch inwards at the sound of her voice that she’s not going to like what Liselle has to tell her. And indeed, it’s not good news.

“S-Sevinarya... I’ve told you already, it’s not as simple as you want it to be. I’m working as fast as I can but these things take *time*. Time that you aren’t giving me!”

Indeed, the other Dark Elf has certainly seen better days. Liselle had always been one of the quieter sorts among Sevv’s ‘gang’. She had her passions though of course, and those passions guided her. Given that Sevv hadn’t actually had any real plans for what she wanted to do out here once they got away from the Capital, she’d never really worried about micromanaging her people before.

No, instead she’d left them mostly to their own devices, only expecting them to be ready to jump when she said jump. As such, Liselle had really flourished once she’d gotten out of that cesspit they’d called their home, escaping the political machinations and plotting and backstabbing.

Frankly, if she hadn’t come with them when she did, Liselle would probably be dead by this point. She simply didn’t have the constitution for surviving in the Capital.

And yet, she’d really come into her own with her spider domestication project. Taking in the giant spiders of the Darkwoods, taming them and using them for

her own purposes. Sevvi hadn't paid it much mind but what little she did hear had sounded very promising.

That was why she'd been so sure that when she told the Lordling about the Spider-Queen it wouldn't be a problem at all to have Liselle whip a big enough spider up for her so they could go ahead and plop it down in the Darkwoods somewhere for Thomas and his minder to find.

Unfortunately, Liselle had become... difficult.

"I've given you two weeks, Liselle. I'm not asking for the moon here woman, I'm just asking for one really big fucking spider. If you can't provide me with that, what use are you?"

Liselle scowls, bristling at Sevvi's tone.

"Again, it's not that simple! I can't just make one of my spiders bigger like that, not without consequences. *Dire* consequences. You have to give me time!"

Unfortunately, they didn't have time. She'd told the human lord a month. That was how long Sevvi had given Thomas to find and slay the Spider-Queen. And it had already been two weeks at this point. Ever since that meeting she'd had with the Lordling in the woods a week back, he and his knight had been ranging further and further in the direction she'd pointed them in, sweeping back and forth.

The problem was, there was nothing there for them to find. Liselle's failure to live up to Sevvi's expectations was making Sevvi into a liar. She *hated* that.

"There isn't any time. I can give you seven more days and that's it Liselle."

Liselle throws her hands up in the air in protest but Sevvi cuts her off before she can speak again with a sharp look.

"Seven days. *Don't* fail me."

That makes the other Dark Elf's mouth click shut. They both know that Sevv, for as lax as she's run this entire operation, can definitely mean business when she wants to. Or to put it in other words... Sevv is the leader for a reason. Not just because she's a Princess, but because she's the strongest of all of them.

More than that though, Sevv feels like she's owed at least a little bit of loyalty regardless of her strength. Hadn't she been the one to bring them all together? Hadn't she been the one to make the plan that saw them escaping from the Capital?

Certainly, Gruda might have betrayed her to her mother, but that didn't mean they hadn't still managed to sneak out under the noses of all of the other noble parents of the rest of Sevv's gang. It wasn't just Liselle who would be dead by now if they were all still back in the Capital. As far as she was concerned, most of these girls owed her their damned lives.

The least they could do was help her out when she needed their fucking help, especially since she let them do whatever they wanted the rest of the damn time!

Spinning on her heel, Sevv leaves Liselle to her work. Three weeks would be cutting it close, but if Liselle could get something together by the end of this week, Sevv could finally point Thomas in the right direction. Sure, he might ride right up to the deadline, but he'd have a full seven days to kill the manufactured Spider-Queen and earn the cure he sought. That was more than enough, especially for someone like him... right?

As she steps back into the hallway, lost in her own thoughts, she almost runs right into Gruda, who it turned out was waiting for her. Stiffening upon registering the other Dark Elf's presence, Sevv's eyes narrow.

"Yes? What is it?"

Gruda has her arms crossed over her chest and looks like she's ready for a fight. The verbal kind rather than the physical though. Not that Sevv is in the mood for either at this point.

“... Why are you pushing her so hard, Seevi? What’s the point?”

Bristling at being questioned by the woman who’s supposed to have her back, Seevi snarls and makes off down the hall with Gruda close on her heels.

“What do you mean what’s the point? I asked her to do something. She hasn’t done it. That’s the fucking point. I’m in charge here, but clearly I’ve been way too lenient with all of you if I can’t even expect you to help out when I need you to.”

“Seevi, you’re asking for a lot in very little time. But that’s not what I’m talking about. *Why* do you care so much whether Liselle succeeds or not? Why do you want the human to succeed so badly?”

Seevi... doesn’t answer that. In the ensuing silence, Gruda makes a frustrated noise in the back of her throat and continues speaking.

“... Isn’t it better if the human fails? I figured that was why you set an impossible task in the first place. Once the month is up you have the leverage to demand more from him. You could even demand that he swear an oath of loyalty to you in exchange for the cure that they seek for the old man, right?”

Still, Seevi stays quiet.

“Isn’t that the idea? To recruit the human? You saved him against the King of the Forest because he proved whatever he needed to prove to you. He’s worthy as far as you are concerned. So now you should be trying to be wrapping him around your little finger.

When Seevi still doesn’t respond, Gruda still doesn’t catch a hint. She continues talking.

“And sure, your first gambit might not have worked, but if Liselle succeeds in making a Spider-Queen and the human kills it, then you’ll have no leverage left. As soon as you cure the old man, you’re giving up the last connection you have... the humans can reasonably wash their hands of you!”

Finally, they reach the outside of Sevv's chambers.

"I just don't understand what your plan is, Sevv! If you would just explain things to me I could help you! We all could! We-urk!"

Quick as a whip, Sevv whirls around and finally reacts... by slamming Gruda into the wall and choking her with an arm across her neck that cuts off her incessant nattering.

"I have asked for help. I have told you what I need from you, from Liselle, from everyone! I do not need to tell you any more than that for you to all do as you're told, Gruda. This is not a committee. I am in charge here and I should think I'm a better leader than you would have ever gotten back home because I have yet to start taking eyes, fingers, or lives for the sheer insolence and incompetence I find myself surrounded by!"

By the time she's done ranting, there's literal spittle leaving her mouth... and Sevv has never felt more like her mother than in this moment. And yet... she can't apologize. She can't take it back. Because to do so would be to show weakness she can't afford.

Yanking her arm back, Sevv glowers at Gruda.

"If you'll excuse me, I have to call my mother. Because someone I thought I could trust gave her a way to contact me despite how far I fled to try to escape her clutches."

With that said, Sevv grabs the communication orb on the post outside of her room and stalks inside. Fortunately Gruda is smart enough not to follow. As she'd been forced to promise all those weeks ago, Sevv has been calling her mother at least once a week unprompted.

She tells herself it's better than letting Gruda do all the talking because who even knows what shit her so-called second in command was feeding to her

mother, but frankly that's a poor consolation prize given Sevvī is confident Gruda reports in to the Queen anyways whenever she's not around.

Placing the call, Sevvī watches in silence for several long moments until finally the face of Queen Klynirra of the Royal House of Vairath, Ruler of their people, materializes in the orb.

"Ah, my dear daughter, how wonderful to see you again. I was wondering if you weren't going to call this week."

Sevvī bristles.

"It's been exactly six days since I last called, mother. I had plenty of time remaining."

"Yes, yes... but really, you could call more often if you wanted."

"Once a week. That's what we agreed upon."

"At *least* once a week my dear girl. Don't be a boor."

Sevvī bristles and gnashes her teeth but nevertheless does her best not to rise to her mother's baiting. Speaking through clenched teeth, she hisses.

"I am reporting in as commanded. My plans out here continue apace without difficulties. There is no cause for concern but also no reason to think I shall be returning to the Capital any time soon."

Klynirra pouts at that.

"Hmph, and why ever not? Surely you should have managed to recruit one human by now. Honestly, what's taking so long?"

Sevvī grimaces.

“You know how humans are, mother. They’re tribal creatures by nature. This human in particular is also not used to being controlled. I don’t want to ruin him, which means I need to take things slow. I need to give him reasons to follow me on top of leaving everything he’s ever known behind. It’s not *simple*, not by a long shot.”

“Oh my. It certainly sounds like you have your hands full. Perhaps I could send someone. One of my veterans should be able to collect the human for you and bring you and him back easily enough.”

“No! I already told you I’m not interested in that! This is my project. You wouldn’t respect me as your heir anyways if I just let you do everything for me!”

The Dark Elf Queen hums at that for a moment before nodding approvingly. As Sevvī had hoped, the mention of ‘heir’ had resonated with her mother. Even as it left a terrible taste in her mouth at the same time.

“Quite right. You’re certainly not wrong... a woman needs to know how to stand on her own two feet, no matter her age. You are my most impressive daughter Sevinarya, I do hope you know that. I’m quite pleased with what I’ve seen so far... and I look forward to seeing what you can do when you return with this asset of yours in tow.”

Schooling her features, not letting even a hint of the grimace appear on her face, Sevvī rolls her shoulders and picks her words carefully.

“Then you’ll just have to be patient and let me do this right, mother.”

Queen Klynirra chuckles, waving a hand dismissively in the orb.

“Yes, yes. As you say. Very well. Continue to keep me informed daughter. I’m eager to see what you manage to do next.”

With that the call comes to an end and Sevvī is left staring at the blank communication orb for a long moment in silence. Finally, she slowly lets out the breath she’s been holding.

Nobody understood her or what she wanted, let alone what she needed. Not her mother, not Gruda, not Liselle. Certainly not the human, Thomas. They all thought they knew her. None of them knew the real her.

... But that was fine. She was the only one who needed to know what was really going on. Everything... everything was proceeding according to plan. That was all that mattered at this point.

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A/N: Hm, what do you guys think? Does Seevi have a plan or is she even bullshitting herself now? :P

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!