

Chapter 18: The Bleeding Eye

Two Days Later

"Mortals of the fold," the speaker declared from the head of the room, "The Eye opens its gaze once more. May Aval's cause shine upon you."

Seer sighed, his eyes lazily scanning the room as he looked for his liaison. Once he spotted her, he wasted no time and paced over, his heavy boots leaving audible steps behind.

"Ah, Knight Seer, welcome back," she spoke with a courteous bow, which Seer returned. "Oathkeeper Sage, ever an honour."

"Oh, come now, Seer," she hummed, amused, "You were never one for such formalities. Why start now?"

"Just thrilled to be in good company, I suppose," Alex retaliated, his eyes glancing up from the floor as he straightened his back.

"It has been years since you last visited us," she hummed. "I never liked the theatrics, as you say," Seer muttered, looking around at the small crowd in the dining hall.

Filled to the brim, that ball room. It was old and regal, built in the ruins of what was once a great stronghold. Even now, one could almost hear the sound of royal orchestra, the names of nobility from far and wide ringing out as they entered the ball room.

A chandelier, hanging overhead, in the middle of the room, suspended from a dark steel chain, alight with a thousand, tiny red flames. The light, trapped and then refracted in the colourless crystals below, bounced off the mirrored walls, making the room look bigger than it was.

Seer hated it.

"Yet you are back now; undoubtedly with questions or a request, of your own," the woman saw through him.

"Of course, you would be the one to guess. Can't an old friend visit?" Seer's voice remained stoic, yet he denied nothing.

"He can. If he has something to trade for his treasures," the Oathkeeper whispered wisely.

"Then it is good that I didn't come emptyhanded," the Seer muttered in return, before pulling out a small satchel of weathered, old leather.

The Sage needed not look inside, before identifying the contents.

"The Northstar's Broch," she hummed, intrigue painted across her tone like a challenge.

"I made a deal with the Banshee. One artefact, for another."

"What was promised for it?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

The Sage smirked, "Good choice."

The woman's black dress flowed over the floor behind her, with crimson woven like rivers, flowing down her back into intricate patterns, with a rose on the small of her back, as she paced away from the middle of the room and into a private quarters, a guest room.

The Seer kept his eyes firmly on the back of her head, as his own, more utilitarian garments sat firmly against his skin. His black and red heat suit was skin tight, leaving a virtually transparent outline of his body clearly visible above his belt, below which he wore military issue utility pants, which covered his features well, in antithesis.

Once he had followed her into the room, he was quick to close the door behind the both of them. They stared at each other for a moment, in silence, as Sage sat down on the foot end of the bed.

A grin slipped through Seer's statue-like visage. Sage returned a smirk of her own, before Seer walked over and sat beside her on the bed.

"So, the Banshee, huh?" Sage's words were softer now.

"That's the one," Seer returned with a soft sigh.

The two of them exchanged another look, before Seer flopped down onto his back.

"You look tired."

"It's been a long week," Seer muttered quietly, as he stared up at the lavishly painted ceiling, which displayed some kind of ancient myth from one of Sarna's works.

The Sage joined him, lying down and looking up at the same painting.

"Just how much did you like him?" Her question had a hint of worry in it.

"A lot, but I had to do it."

"Hm."

The two remained in a few moments of silence, until Sage spoke up again.

"What if I visit you in Coredam?"

Seer shook his head faintly, "Too dangerous. Your place is here, under Aval."

"Yours is too."

"You have more to lose."

The Sage rolled onto her side and prodded herself up a bit with her arm, looking down at Seer, next to her.

"You sell your needs short," she stated, placing a reassuring hand upon his shoulder.

Seer glanced at her, before looking back up at the ceiling, remaining silent.

Sage sighed, "You think you are the only one who sees through that veil?"

"Just trying to avoid another Aval-Ephes situation here."

"With whom?"

"Does it matter?"

Sage scoffed, "Why, yes, Seer, for some of us it really does. It's not like you notify me of the stuff you do out there."

Seer turned his head away, but Sage placed her hand on his cheek and brought his gaze back to her.

"Tell me, Seer."

"You already know."

"I want to hear you say it."

Seer lifted his head and carefully kissed her lips, before pulling back again and staring into her eyes for a moment.

Sage let go of his cheek, which prompted him to sit back up.

He stood up, off the bed, and fixed his clothes as much as he could, before slowly moving towards the door.

"Knight."

"Oathkeeper."

"Stay safe out there."

Seer glanced at her with his peripheral, saying nothing more when he left the room, nor when he closed the door.