

## ***The Incarnate's Challenge***

“Champion! Look into my eyes.”

Sierra groaned, tossing down her sword. She was a tall, muscular woman with light brown skin and short, shaggy black hair, piercing yellow eyes, and a body that was covered in almost-invisible scars. “Fuck you,” she growled, turning towards the voice. “Let me fight how... I...”

In her annoyance, she had made eye contact with her visitor, just for a moment. Her words slurred as she stared into the black depths of the silver-skinned elf's eyes, feeling clouds of darkness rise around her, chaining her mind. “Am I to be your champion?” she found herself asking, each word bitten out with barely-contained hate.

“You are to be my champion,” the elf agreed with a sneer. “Light leathers only. I want you quick. Then your sword and shield.” He pointed to the weapon and armor he meant for her to wear, then crossed his arms and waited.

“Yes, sir.” Under her master's watchful eye, Sierra stripped off the cloth shirt and breeches she had been training in, leaving her standing before him in a thin breast wrap and underwear. She felt his eyes on her as she dressed for battle, pulling on the laughably insufficient leather jerkin and a knee-length skirt. The bodice of the jerkin laced up in the front, leaving her cleavage on display as she belted her sword at her side and slid the small buckler over her arm. “Who am I to fight?”

“That's up to the queen,” the elf sneered. “How do you not even know *that* yet? I swear, all those hits to the head must have broken something. At least put on a good show before they break you this time, my reputation is on the line.”

Sierra's face twisted in anger, but she nodded dutifully. “Of course, master,” she said.

“Good.” The elf pointed to the door. “Get out there and prepare yourself.”

Before she was even ready, Sierra was moving, her legs carrying her out the door following the gesturing finger of her current master. Her hand clenched the hilt of her sword tightly, the only protest that her foolish oaths allowed her.

Sierra had been a guild adventurer, an Incarnate who had chosen to master the blade and song. She could sing a note that could cut steel, use her blade to cut a hole in space or the confidence from her foes. She had been so confident that she had begun to take on quests alone, cutting down foes with cool certainty. Until she had cut down a basilisk that was

terrorizing a small town, only to learn that it was a prized pet of Queen Morrigan, and the queen's soldiers had proved a challenge far too dangerous for Sierra to face.

Queen Morrigan had saved her life, restored her to health. She demanded that Sierra demonstrate her gratitude for the queen's mercy, and fight as a champion in her arena. She swore that no enemy would deliver permanent harm to the Incarnate, and that once she won seven battles, she would be free to return home. Sierra had easily agreed, confident once again that seven battles would be an easy task.

In retrospect, she should have been more cautious as to what 'champion' meant.

Sierra wasn't fighting *for* the Queen, she was fighting *against* her, as the champion of whatever fae noble the Queen had a minor problem with. And the Queen had no reason to make such fights fair. Instead of being free to fight as she wished, using her magic and her years of experience, she was shackled to the orders of the Queen's petitioners, challengers, or victims. The moment she looked into their eyes, her will deserted her, leaving her mind locked in the depths of her body. She could only follow their commands, her master telling her what strategy to undertake, how to fight and win - or, much more often, lose. She'd lost count of the battles she had fought. Dozens, at least. So far, she'd won four, including her last match.

Maybe today would be number five.

As she stepped into the arena, she saw that it was a busy day, hundreds of fae gathered to watch her fight and suffer the consequences of failure. The arena fights were very popular, and she felt her limbs rise as she saluted the assembled crowd against her will. In a box seat behind her, her controller bowed as well, offering subservience to the queen he intended to match himself against. She didn't know what the stakes were, of course. Presumably not high, but she couldn't tell with the fae. His life could be on the line and it wouldn't show.

"Battling for Lord Maelvir, the adventurer Sierra, Incarnate of the Guild of Rubies!" There was a mixture of cheering and mocking jeers as the fae took Sierra in; she simply turned slowly, raising her sword to the crowd and giving them a good look at her. "And battling for Queen Morrigan... *the Orkupine!*"

Sierra groaned internally. She'd fought the Orkupine once. It had gone poorly.

The creature lumbered out of the other gate, a vaguely-humanoid shape made up of tight, twisted vines with dozens of thin pointed spines sticking out from every limb. It wasn't actually an orc; the queen just thought that large and green meant orc-like, and presumably the pun amused her.

Sierra started to crouch, but her master was already taking over, and she had to obey. “Circle left! Slash at its knee!” His voice was magically carried to her ears, and her body surged into motion.

It was a terrible plan, bringing her directly into the path of the creature’s long arms, and as Sierra tried to run around it one arm came down in a low swing. Spines dug into her leather, and she was immediately lifted off her feet, sword falling to the ground as the creature reached up and then slammed her into the sandy floor of the arena.

“Kick it! Kick it!” Sierra’s heart sank as she realized that her master had no intention of winning, or even putting on a good show. He just wanted to watch her squirm. But she dutifully kicked out at the creature, and within seconds her boots were speared through, the points scraping lightly against the soles of her feet as she struggled fruitlessly against the creature.

The Orkupine reached around, pulling her in as though hugging her, and she felt its spines plunge through her armor, pressing dangerously into her back and tucking up just under her breasts. It wouldn’t take much for it to squeeze her to death, but of course she had been promised ‘no permanent injuries’, and the queen always kept her promises.

But with magic in play, ‘permanent’ could, and did, do a lot of work.

“Squirm out of its grasp! Really wriggle!” Sierra felt a spine cut through the lacings of her bodice as she obeyed, and she growled in real anger as her breasts spilled out, put on display for the jeering crowd once again. Her wiggling caused the points of the beast’s spines to leave bright red scratches across her skin, none quite deep enough to draw blood but all enough to leave a trail of pain that drew a gasp from the woman. Then she felt the Orkupine stirring beneath her, and her eyes widened.

“Yes! Struggle more! But be silent about it. Don’t upset the queen. Look down, and really start looking scared.”

The Orkupine’s member was growing long and stiff beneath her, and thanks to her godsdamned skirt the only thing between it and her maidenhood was a thin strip of cloth. She didn’t have to fake the fear in her eyes, even if she would usually have covered it with anger; like the rest of it, the massive shaft of the creature was covered in small, pointed spines.

But all of her efforts to escape were useless. This wasn’t going to be win number five, it was going to be a humiliation match, to truly remind her of her place after her win last time.

The creature plunged into her, its shaft tearing the cloth of her underwear and pushing it up inside her like the world’s most haphazard condom, and despite her orders Sierra

couldn't restrain a shriek of pain, head thrown back as the points of the shaft dragged themselves along her length. As the crowd's jeering grew louder, and the Orkupine's thrusts grew more frenzied, all that she could think was that at least it couldn't get any worse.

"Oh, yes. Get into it. Moan a little bit. Try to rub your breasts."

A stifled sob slipped out before Sierra's face settled into a mask of feigned lust, her arms pushing against the spines holding them in place to try to reach her breasts and put on a show. Of all her failures, this was by far the worst.

And the terrible thought was slithering around the back of her mind - now that her masters knew they could get *this* kind of show, how much worse could things get for her?

Sierra looked up across the arena, into the pitiless smile of Queen Morrigan, and she had a sinking feeling that she was going to find out.