

Betrayal and War- Grudges of Old, The Cold War

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This is the second bit and also where Jean will finally come into play along with Mourn, the Noble of Naggaroth, and Elsare the Noble of Athel Loren with his son Murien.

Enjoy!

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Grudges of Old, The Cold War

Malekith's need for the falling of the elven nations had recited itself thousands of years after his first ambition. His failings in Ulthuan impeded his march enough times, and he believed it was time for a change. The burning city was falling beneath his wrath. Mourn spat on the ground, as his followers brought a line of men before him. Pulling his blade with a heartless, cold stare on his face, looking down at the shameful humans, the elves in front of Mourn had to watch the execution of these men stupid enough to revolt against King Malekith's rule. Estalia wasn't united and was but a smear on the map that merely stood in Mourn's way. He would make sure it would crumble under the weight of his feet on his march to Athel Loren. The only army that he knew would stand to the defense of the elves or, most likely, just for themselves would be Bretonnia.

Leveling the town, Mourn and his army advanced with a slow pace towards the border of Carcassonne in Bretonnia. It would not be long before he reached his destination, all the while he would slay anyone who would stand in his way. His armies were larger then what one's imagination could comprehend. They would split to reach Athel Loren though: one would push passing through the Bretonnian lands of Carcassonne and Quenelles and the other half towards Miragliano just south of the Forest of Loren. The pace of their army couldn't be slowed, no matter how much the Estalians would rise to the defense. The ultimate fate of Athel Loren would lie in the defense of Quenelles and Miragliano alone.

Elsare drew his blade with inspection and weaved it through the air with ease. His dark, brown eyes glow in the night, his hood engulfing his face in shadow. "The sound of hooves prevails once more." He whispered into the fragile winter air, breaking the silence. He drew back his arrow and took careful aim on the intruder that was passing before him in belief he was unnoticed. With but a movement of Elsare's finger, the arrow whizzed passed the trees and his target fell to the ground dead. The foolish Bretonnian knave who dared to cross into his wood had met a quick death, fortunately. Elsare emerged from the forest to loot anything of worth, his son following behind. "These are worrying times, my son. It is more and more often the Bretonnians send their messengers through our sacred forest." Elsare said, pulling a note from the man's cold, dead hands. Handing it to Murien, he unraveled the scroll and read it aloud:

"To fair Viscount Morfis von Borsuade of the Empire, Bretonnia rallies now from a threat of the West which dares laugh in the face of humanity. A request for aid is asked of Carcassonne immediately to justly crush the offense pushed against our fair lands. The lands weep from raids and pillages and our mighty fortresses are challenged by this foe. It is said they leveled cities in Estalia with their cruel will and march towards our borders. We need assistance, please send aid. The lands..."

Murien trailed off. "This man died before finishing this letter. Father, what is known to threaten our Western defenders is known to threaten us!" Murien exclaimed. Elsare pondered over the letter, slinging his bow over his back. "The armies of the West could only be Naggaroth." He stated, "the Dark Elves wish to renew old wars..." Elsare finished looking at the Bretonnian before him in shame. Murien's face questioned his father and Elsare addressed this quickly. "Long ago," Elsare began, "Malekith, Witch King of the cult of Dark Elves, tried to dominate the Elven race. His dark wrath again and again attempted to put himself into the great throne as ruler of all elves. Thus far, he has failed, but he has taken a bloody oath that one day he will destroy all of those who oppose him, starting with his own race."

Murien looked to his father with a sudden pride in himself. "I will not stop fighting as long as Athel Loren stands, and even then I will fight for our freedom until my death." He whispered to him. "We can only hope the Gods of this world have planned a fate that will benefit us." Elsare said, letting his head drop in despair.

Far to the North of Athel Loren and the South-Bretonnian provinces, a lone yeoman rode across a field covered with a blanket of snow. A great castle stood by the sea, its banners bright and flying high in the wind. The gates that guard the inner city slowly creaked open and the rider strutted inward.

The sound of a fast pace down the hollow hallways rang through the great castle as the peasant entered the great hall. Tapestries lavished in gold and silver, with illuminating colors, hung from the walls, the chandeliers over the large oak table below, in the middle of the hall, were encrusted with jewels from around the Old World. The hall was lit by fabulous torches that cackled a gentle fire circling the room and the golden chandeliers let out their dim light from the candles above. At the far end of the room, at the end of the table, was a plush and royal chair. A man sat in it, drinking wine from a golden cup. The yeoman entered with haste.

"Lord Marcel," He said, kneeling before his lord, "a message for you, sent with urgency milord." "Thank you, Hugo." He said, taking the letter from his messenger. Mumbling the words contained in the letter, he slammed it down and took no time in calling for his armor, the peasants scrambling to obey his orders to get it.

Marching up the stairs to his bedroom and kneeling by the bedside, he woke his darling wife who slept. She opened her beautiful, luring eyes in tired slits and whispered with her awakening voice. "Jean?" she asked with a tired mutter.

"Shannon," Jean replied, "you must wake. Our services are being called upon by an old friend. We are called to Miragliano by Lord Dubane. It seems there's a peasant revolt caused by worry of some army said to be coming. Dubane doubts there is any harm coming their way, but he needs us to be there none-the-less, in case." He finished, leaning over and kissing her forehead. Her soft smile crept onto her face, as she closed her eyes and put her arms around Jean's neck and whispered that she would be down soon. Nodding his head, Lord Marcel walked downstairs and armored himself, his group of servants watching him, waiting upon three words they wished to hear. "...Assemble the knights!"

Elsare assembled a sizeable force during the winter months. The mighty Tree Kin of the forest joined beside him, the Eternal Guard assembled in great ranks. War Dancers, trained in the fighting styles of the Trickster God: Loec, prepared and sharpened their blades, as the defenders of Athel Loren armed themselves with longbow and sword. "There is a war coming to our fair woods and we will be ready! Our prophets have foretold the day of Malekith's return to the Old World and he now marches upon us, despite the lack of knowledge from the human outsiders. If we must, we will fight beside mankind and bring the alliances of old back to the world. We shall fight that which threatens Athel Loren and rout them by whatever means possible.!" Elsare shouted out, a wave of cheers breaking the uneasy silence of the winter night.

The Cold War of the Western Old World had begun, the armies assembled themselves for war whether they knew what they were getting themselves into or not. Bretonnia's Jean Marcel L'Impéteur marched to the aid of Miragliano from a peasant revolt, but he would stay for much more than that. Duke Huebald assembled his grand army of Carcassonne to face the upcoming threat, the rest of the provinces unaware of what was to come.

The Wood Elves mobilized their forces in protection of the woods and would fight beside the humans in defense of their homes which the armies of Naggaroth sought to destroy. The fey emerged from their snow-covered forest to march towards the fortresses of men. A war was about to erupt, the realms of mankind knew not, but the elves prepared for the onslaught.