

**NIHILANIA'S**  
**Dark Knight**

**A.BELLA**





A. BELLA

# DARK KNIGHT

TEASER



# Contents

0. Introduction.....	5
1. Days of Future Past.....	7
2. Gathering Storm.....	15
3. Flying Whales.....	TBW
4. Symphony of Destruction.....	TBW
5. Ace of Spades.....	TBW
6. Starman.....	TBW
7. All Guns Blazing.....	TBW
8. At the End of the Rainbow.....	TBW



# INTRODUCTION TO NIHILTANIA

Nihiltania is a dark fantasy world where nasty stuff happens. There are four continents: Valeria, Frostholm, Sandora, and Shadowmire. Valeria, Forsthalm, and Sandora are connected by land while Shadowmire is an island. In between the mainland and Shadowmire lays the Middle Sea. Throughout Nihiltania live a variety of beings like Humans, Elves, Giants, Dwarves, Gnomes, Goblins, and Beastmen. Each of them also has different varieties depending on where are they from etc. There are also god-like creatures. The highest tiers are The Spirit and The Guardian. Spirit created all life and maintains it while Guardian has created all matter and all of the worlds.

The Dark Knight is the final story in the Blade Trilogy timeline. Before reading this story, it is advised to read Nihiltania's Guardian and Nihiltania's Dragonslayer but you don't have to. I do not care. The Dark Knight takes place in Nihiltania three hundred years after the Great Valerian War (Nihiltania's Dragonslayer). It is about two men with two different motivations striving for the same goal. Enjoy reading, or don't.





## *Chapter 1*

# **DAYS OF FUTURE PAST**

Three hundred years. It has been over three hundred years since it all started. Since the Spirit gave me false hopes. She knew what she was doing, and I would spend eternity just to hurt her the same way. After all this time, it still hurts like a fresh, open wound. The only person I've ever loved. The first time I returned to her, I couldn't even reach her. I couldn't stick around the second time, and I never saw her again. Sometimes I wonder, what happened to her. Three centuries is a long time. The world has changed but my ambitions remained the same. During my venturing, I've killed all kinds of things, but the blood elves still hold the first place regarding quantity, second is everything else. Now I wander through the moonlit night.

The Dark Knight rode his horse, making his way through southern Valeria. He didn't resemble a living creature, and neither did his horse. His armor was made out of black, shiny metal. It appeared to be a piece of rock rather than armor. Spikes covered every centimeter of the plating. The helmet made the wearer look like an animal, a beast, or most suitably, a being out of this world, its eyes being illuminated by small flames that manifested themselves in the eyeholes. The armor structure could seem to limit the being's mobility. But you couldn't be more incorrect. On his back, he wore a large, spiked, black lance, fittingly named Spirit Crusher. Lastly, not even Dark Knight was sure if the thing he rode could be called a horse. The horse had black fur, red glowing eyes, and long horns. The creature also had hardened spiky plates, covering vital parts of its body.

The Dark Knight had become a legend, a myth. In the beginning, he killed everyone that he came across but that stopped long ago. Back then he couldn't stop moving. The Soulwardens pursued this dark spirit for over a century until they stopped one day. He was a rogue dark spirit—one with a goal larger than life itself.

On his way, he stopped on a grassy hill. He got down from his horse and sat down. He took off his helmet, revealing his long blonde hair and blue eyes. He looked up toward the night sky. Approximately half of the stars above his head were moving at a slow pace. It was Seriphalion, the celestial serpent passing by Nihiltania. Even after thousands of years, his existence was a part of a debate. Some described the star shift as a recurring celestial event, others believed it to be the celestial serpent. The dark knight continued gazing upon the stars, lost in deep contemplation. Deep in his heart, he felt calm but nervous simultaneously. His more recent discovery was causing him these emotions—the so-called holy child.

There is a legend that every thousand years, a child is born that is in some way, connected directly to the Spirit. It is supposed to repair Nihiltania in some kind. In his years of searching, he found old scriptures that approximately pinpointed when the last Holy Child was born and when the next one would come. He waited for so long that the approximate date was now fast approaching.

He stood up from the cold ground and equipped his helmet. He got on his horse and rode toward the harbor city of Valor. But before going to the city he made a little detour to a smaller forest by the southern mountains. Preferably he needed to be dark so he sped up to get there before the dawn. As he approached the forest, he could hear some commotion coming from deeper within the forest. That threw him off a bit but he ventured further until he came across a little pond surrounded by dense bushes. He got down from the horse and walked over to an armored bag that the horse had on his side. Reaching inside he grabbed a smaller cloth pouch that had a symbol burned out on itself and was tied with a string. With his large gauntlets, he untied the pouch in which lay two small glowing gems. They emanate a bright blue light and bore the same symbol as the pouch. He carefully picked up one of them and retied the knot, then placed the pouch back in the bag, and with the gem clenched in his hand, he walked over to the pond.

The nightly breeze was rustling the leaves that surrounded the Dark Knight. Excluding the unsettling commotion somewhere in the forest, the night seemed peaceful. The Dark Knight stood on the edge of the small pond. It appeared that he was hesitant about his next move. His grip on the little gem tightened. His hands were trembling ever so slightly, while his heart was beating faster than usual. Before he continued, he took a deep breath and regained his composure. Afterward, he extended his arm over the pond, and with a sudden, persistent squeeze, he crushed the small gem. From between his fingers, an iridescent, shimmering dust began to descend to the water's surface gracefully. Then he opened his fist and poured all the remaining dust into the pond. When the particles made contact with the water, the pond ignited with ethereal radiance. Abstract objects could be seen floating in the water. The sight was mesmerizing.

His horse curiously observed the ritual from behind him. The knight watched and waited until all the dust particles landed in the pond and mixed with the water. Then he slowly stepped into the cool water, step by step. He was slowly descending deeper into the pond. His horse was waiting by the tree, to which he was tied. The knight didn't float at all. His heavy, spiked armor dragged him deeper into the dark depths until he disappeared completely.

When his head was submerged in the glowing liquid, the pond's floor expanded infinitely into a boundless, dark void. The ground below his feet disappeared and he finally began to float. The water around him disappeared and air filled his lungs. Darkness surrounded him, except for a little bright orange light in the distance. His heartbeat once again spiked as he waited, floating in the void. After a brief minute, an alien, glowing woman emerged from beneath him, and at the sight of him, she gasped.

"Oh my, my eyes must be fooling me. No. It is you, my little immortal rascal." She giggled after finishing her sentence as she placed her palm before her mouth.

"Long time no see, Ms. Spirit." The Dark Knight responded while staring her down.

"Hmhm, what brings you here after all those years? What are you up to this time?" She asked.

"I've come to ask you about the Holy Child." The Dark Knight says with a monotone but serious voice.

The Spirit's eyes widen as he finishes his sentence. "The Holy Child? W-What about it?!" She asks, now with a visible frown and tension. All of her usual playfulness was gone.

"What connection do you have with the Holy Child is my question." He says now determined to get an answer.

"Holy Child is merely one of my minions that I send down to Nihiltania every millennium or so..." She says with a steady composure. The Dark Knight notices how suddenly her approach to the matter has changed.

"Hmm really? Well, then I have one more question. I've found an ancient script, one of a kind. It says that the last Holy Child died prematurely at a young age and after that, all of the creatures in Nihiltania were sterilized for decades, which almost caused a wipeout of all life in the world, why was that?" Just as he finished talking, the Spirit's eyes lit up. She was about to burst out but contained her anger and just responded.

"Leave. Now." She said and floated away. Their whole encounter lasted just a minute or two, but that was all the confirmation he needed. There was a connection. The death of The Holy Child had to cause damage to her since she is responsible for all living beings in Nihiltania, and their sterilization had to be caused by her being too damaged by the event. Then suddenly he was once again submerged in the cold water of the pond. He began to make his way up back to the surface until he emerged from the water. The pond was no longer glowing when he looked back. As he was stepping out of the cold water, he had a grin under his helmet. His goal was now clear. Wait and kill The Holy Child. "Whatever happens to her when the child dies does something terrible to her." He thought to himself as he got on the horse. Just as he sat down on the horse's back, a bolt came flying right into the horse's neck, but instead of digging in, the bolt snapped when it crashed against the horse's skin. The Dark Knight looked in the direction from where the bolt came from. Behind a bush, a young blood elf was peeking with a metal-hardened crossbow.

The elf was in disbelief after the horse stood, completely unfazed by the bolt that he shot at it. Before the blood elf could do anything. The Spirit Crusher flew right into his face and out the back, decapitating the poor guy. Blood and brain matter splattered everywhere, and pieces of his skull were all over the ground. The Spirit Crusher was stuck in the ground right beside the body.

The Dark Knight walked over on his horse and pulled out the lance from the ground. He noticed the elf's crossbow, so he picked it up by the string with the lance and then began to inspect it closely.

"Hmm, their weapons got a lot better since I've last seen them." He thought while taking a closer look at the crossbow's structure. It was made out of steel, the string was metallic and very springy. It can shoot bolts at incredible 'speed. It also had a proper scope for maximum accuracy. It was an impressive piece of weapon engineering. But at the end of the day, weapons like crossbows were slowly getting replaced by a new kind of weaponry. The new era brought us the musket. Even though gunpowder-powered weapons aren't new, muskets proved to be incredible tools for killing and are now replacing older weaponry, like crossbows. Using a magazine system, the musket wielders can shoot repeatedly, bullets of all kinds, short or long range, don't matter. Muskets themselves are still being developed and have become popular in recent years.

The Dark Knight inspected and admired the metallic crossbow, after which he threw it back on the ground. The sun slowly began to rise, the forest wasn't so dark anymore. He was about to leave for Valor when the commotion he heard last night was much louder now. Since his earlier encounter, he decided to check it out. And so he began to ride toward the source of the sounds slowly. After a few minutes, he reached the top of a hill and the forest's edge. Down on the plains beside, lay a blood elf camp. Something was going on down there. The Dark Knight observed what was the commotion all about. And why did it last the whole night?

In the camp, there was a different story brewing. A blood elf recruit named Hawk was just about to be executed for conspiracy and dishonor toward the great purification. He was just sixteen. This was a military recruitment camp, where Hawk's mother worked as a nurse coincidentally. The commotion from the day before was caused due to Hawk's verdict to be executed. His mother was filled with rage, knowing that her son was a traitor, and his friends were disappointed.

But Hawk didn't hold remorse for his actions and believed that their doing was wrong, now he was about to be made an example. The Dark Knight wasn't sure what was even going on over there. But after all, it was a blood elf camp, so he might as well erase it from existence. He charged down the hill with his lance raised. His horse's hooves crushing against the ground sounded like a thunderstorm...

Everything was so vague. I remember being cold and stuck in some dark hole. Someone was there, just beside me. The person was screaming at me. It was a terrible, dreadful feeling. It felt like an eternity. My mouth felt dry and my stomach hurt, from beating. Blood was pouring down my face and from my nose. After a long time, someone grabbed me and pulled me somewhere away. The sun shined on my face, completely blinding me. They dragged me on for dozens of meters until we stopped, somewhere. I was pushed down on my knees and was forced to bend over on a stone slab. I tried to move but my hands and ankles were tied with a steel rope that was bruising them. My sight began to slowly return, there were people around, gazing at me. I realized a tall man was standing beside me with a great axe. My mother stood in the crowd, she had a blank stare on her face. This was an execution, and I was the one to be killed. A storm was coming, and I heard thunder in the distance. But the sky seemed especially clear that day. Maybe I was delusional, I thought. Some people began to look unnerved and look around. The executioner stepped closer while the crowd began to slowly devolve into absolute panic. Something rode into the camp and at high speed, it started devouring everyone there. The executioner ran over, trying to strike it with his axe but instead got pierced with some kind of lance. When the person on the horse pulled the lance out, it took the executioner's ribcage with it. It was a grizzly scene. But I didn't feel much. They were bad people, only fueled by hate. I didn't want a violent and hateful world. But what could I've done? I just lay there on the slab, waiting around to die.

After a while, the screams went silent. Then the sunshine that was landing on my face got blocked by some tall figure. "Hey!" He yelled and poked me with the bloody lance. After no response from me, he pushed me over with it. Now we were looking at each other, eye to eye as I lay on my back.

“What is this supposed to be? Were they planning on executing you? Why?” He said as he seemed puzzled.

“Conspiracy...” I responded, my throat was sore and the words barely made it out of my mouth. The tall man in the dark armor laughed at my answer.

“So what are you? A rogue blood elf? What were you conspiring?” The man asked. He had a helmet on, but I could feel he was grinning with curiosity.

“I-I wasn’t in line with their ideology. I don’t want anyone to suffer...” I responded. I felt like I was going to pass out. The man seemed to get lost in his thoughts for a few seconds. He was thinking about something.

“Hmm... No more suffering you say? How does total sterilization sound to you?” He said after he was done thinking.

“Huh? H-How do you plan to do that?” I was shocked by his words. But I was willing to listen to him.

“Well, let’s say there will be a Holy Child born in a few years. It is connected to The Spirit, killing it would hurt The Spirit enough to cause a total sterilization, definitely a stronger one than the last one did. Then, there will be no more suffering. As simple as that.” The man began to explain his plans to me. I began to come to my senses and began to think about it.

“But... But it won’t be that easy. You will have to kill leading up to it. And why are you even telling me this?” I began to slowly get up from the slab I was lying on.

“First of all, yes people will die and suffer, but it’s all for the greater good. And second, I’m telling you this because I would like someone to help me with this. You’ve been trained with the most advanced weapons this era has to offer and you have a solid motivation.” He continued explaining himself. Even though I knew the total sterilization was just a by-product of his true goal, I yielded. I got up and looked at him, only then I realized who I was talking with the whole time. It was the dark knight, I was surprised but then I looked around at the massacre that occurred minutes ago.

“Okay... I’ll help you... F-For the greater good.” I said while staring at him.

“Excellent. Now, you have half an hour to gather any gear you want, and then we’re leaving.” He said and made his way to the edge of the camp.





## GATHERING STORM

It took me a moment to absorb what he said. I have thirty minutes. I began to look around the camp. The ground was soaked with blood. Dead bodies lay everywhere. Instinctively I immediately went for the armory. On my way there I saw my mother in a pool of her own blood. I stopped and stood there for a moment looking at her. I didn't feel sad, or bad for her. She was as evil as everyone else. She lived to hate. I kept on running.

"I'm going to grab a musket, I was the best with them. It should do the job" I thought as I ran until I saw our trainer's corpse lying in the grass by the dormitory. He had his uniform on, as usual, he was missing his arm. It was nowhere in sight. But a few meters from his body laid his musket. The thing was this was no ordinary musket. Our trainer had a personalized, modified musket. This musket was special... Very special in fact. The modifications made it probably the most advanced firearm in Nihiltania. I stopped and walked over to it. I never got to see it from up close.

It had a scope, consisting of four collimators. The zoom depends on how much of them you have up (enabled). The barrel was gold-painted with a ventilation shaft to prevent overheating and was modified to increase the accuracy for a long range. The chamber was reinforced to sustain even the most powerful of rounds. The stock and grip were modeled for better recoil control. On the side was a golden name tag reading "Spitfire". It was a fitting name, I guess. Anyway, I picked it up and slung it over my shoulder, and then I searched the trainer's body for anything useful. On himself he had an ammo bag that could be attached to a belt, I took it and equipped it.

Besides that, he didn't possess anything useful. When I stood up and attached the bag to my belt I made my way over to the armory. I opened the door of the cabin and entered. The place was filled to the brim with weaponry. I stepped closer to the uniform cabinet. At the time I had a white shirt, mahogany pants, and military boots, a standard recruit wear. I began to dig through the cabinet. Eventually, I pull out a red scout cape with the Legion symbol on the back. Since I was a child I always found these capes neat. I took it and I put it on. After that, I grabbed some more ammunition and some smaller melee weapons.

By the time I walked out I had only about ten minutes left, I spent the time I had left gathering rations which I placed into a few bags that I attached to the horse's saddle. The white horse I took also belonged to my trainer, his name was Nemesis. When I was done packing I mounted the horse and went to the camp's edge where The Dark Knight awaited me.

"Hmm, well let's go now." He says when he sees me approaching. We begin to head east.

"So... Y-You are the Dark Knight?" I asked him.

"Yeah. You could say so." He responded in a monotone voice.

"I'm Hawk by the way. Do you have a name?" I said as I awaited his answer.

"Uhhmm. I... My name is... Arno..." He said. He seemed hesitant before he said his name. He probably wasn't used to saying it too often, maybe he had even forgotten it for a moment.

"Okay, Arno. So what's the plan? You said the child is supposed to be born in a few years, so what are we going to do? Do you even know where the child will be when it's born?" I unloaded a barrage of questions upon him, just so we're on the same page.

"Firstly, I do not know where is the child going to be born. But there is a rumor of an artifact existing that could help us find it. Second, we're heading to Shadowmire to retrieve it." Arno began explaining his plan.

"I know you'll ask it sooner or later so I'll just tell you. The artifact is a compass called Pathfinder, in short, it shows you the way to anything you desire. From what I've heard, it has to be enchanted in a certain way. Let's say you want to find someone with it. Then you have to enchant it with something that is connected to the person you are trying to find. That could be a problem for us, but it is our best option for what I know." Arno told me. I listened closely to him.

"I understand. But you are sure the total sterilization will happen, are you?" I asked.

"It should, something similar happened last time when The Holy Child died. The second time it should be even more extreme." Arno responds, sounding quite confident, so I decide to give him the benefit of the doubt. We slowly continued riding through the southern plains. In the distance, I could see the southern mountains. The Valor port was still pretty far, but at this speed, we should reach it within a few hours.

The boy was following me. His name was Hawk, and he was a rogue blood elf. I enjoyed having his company, he reminded me of someone. Pathfinder... Is it even real? Could it be just a rumor? No... It cannot be that far from the truth. As we were riding through the plains, everything went black. I was in a familiar place. I rode on. It was the void again. Something shining floated over to me.

“Long time no see, B-D-umm how should I even call you?” The figure asked.

“Arno...” I responded.

“Ohh, Arno... Is that your original name? You never wanted me to call you this, is this the name yo—”

“What do you want?” I cut him off. It was The Guardian. He was an orange-glowing alien-looking armored man.

“You should be careful about what you want to do next. The Spirit is watching you, the Soulwardens can return to hunt you at any moment.” He begins to say this stuff.

“What are you even talking about? Why are you telling me this?” I was baffled.

“Hah, well. What can I say, I’m bored. I don’t have anything to do unlike Spirit, I can just spectate now and I want to make things interesting.”

“Also all of this paranoia began after your last visit. You painted a target on your forehead by asking her about The Holy Child. And I think it is futile to try to convince you that total sterilization is not possible. So from now on, be careful with your actions.” The Guardian says. I don’t respond, but I keep his words in the back of my mind. He notices me ignoring him.

“Very well.” He says before the dark void transforms into the plains I was riding through moments before. The Guardian is gone as well. Hawk is still riding beside him. He seems lost in thoughts.

“Does your horse have a name, Arno?” Hawk asks me suddenly.

“Ehm, I think I gave him one before. It was something like Jumong?”

“Huh? What kind of name is that? What does it mean?” Hawk asks.

“I think it doesn’t mean anything.” I respond.

“나는 이 치욕스러운 모습에 갇힌 죽음의 황제다.” Jumong says. Hawk almost falls off Nemesis from how it startled him.

“What the fuck?!” Hawk freaks out in confusion.

“Hey shut the fuck up!” I shout at the horse.

“What was that?! What is he saying?!” Hawk keeps shouting at me.

“I have no clue...” I respond in a defeated tone.

Many hours later, we arrived in Valor. The city had large, majestic walls that surrounded it. We rode on a paved road that led to the city's entrance.

"So... what kind of boat are we gonna take?" Hawk asked me as we were approaching the city's main gate.

"We're gonna have to find someone who will be willing to take us with them. We can't go by public ship because we need our weapons and those are banned there."

"Oh okay. By the way, aren't you gonna like, attract unwanted attention, I mean, with your armor and horse and all?"

"I'm not that obvious, believe me, there's a lot of wacky figures here." I told Hawk and he nodded in agreement.

"Hold up! And what about me?! I'm a blood elf!" Hawk began to panic a little.

"Since you are not killing anyone here, you should be fine. Although the Legion scout cape you got there is not helping much." Hawk was shaking as we entered the city. The guards gave us nasty looks but didn't even stop us.

The city was stunning, it was built on a hill and spread all the way down to the beach, where the harbor was located.

"Holy shit! This place is humongous!" Hawk's panic was quickly swapped with uncontrollable excitement. I've been here before, so my reaction was much more bland, but I have to admit, the city is a sight to behold. As we rode through the streets of large, beautiful buildings made of marble. People give us weird looks, but I would too in their place. I observed how they were dressed. It was completely different from what people wore back in my time. It's a different world now. Knights are not a thing anymore, anyone who thinks of themselves as a knight is considered to be crazed. I don't consider myself to be a knight. I'm a vengeful spirit. The sun was setting. Hawk pulled out a pocket watch, looked at it, and said.

"Oy Arno, where are we going to spend the night? I'm getting tired..."

"Uhm, okay. Let's find some inn."

"Inn? Haha, what the hell is that?"

"Huh? A place where you pay for a room where you can spend the night. You don't know that?"

"Oooh, you mean a hostel. So you really are that old!" Hawk said with a huge grin on his face. Little bastard. I didn't mind though. Traveling with someone is better than alone. In my wanderings throughout the years I thought I would lose my mind any day from the isolation.

The part of the city we were traversing was a little too noble, so we rode to a let's say cheaper part of the town where we found an in- a hostel. Luckily, horses were still used by most people so we tied ours to the post outside, I took off my helmet, and my long blonde hair waved in the breeze.

"Woah!" Hawk shrieked.

"What?" I looked at him.

"Oh, nothing... I just didn't realize that you were... you know... a human?"

"I'm a dark spirit now. This body is just a vessel." I said while I grabbed something from Jumong's bag.

"Wait, then whose body is this? And where is his soul?" I rolled my eyes at Hawk's questioning.

"I'll tell and explain how it works to you one day." Hawk was not happy with me dodging the questions.

"Whatever..." He frowns while he takes off baggage from Nemesis. We begin to walk to the hostel's entrance.

"Hey, are you not taking your bags with you? What if someone steals them?" Hawk lands another set of questions on me.

"They won't, the bags are rune-sealed. Only I can open them and take them off." We finally get in and I walk to the reception while still holding my helmet in my hand. The place is pretty dark but nothing too bad, an average hostel. An old hag is sitting behind the reception table. She glances towards the duo. Arno's presence in his heavy spiky armor seems to not bother her in the slightest.

"Good evening ma'am. I would like a room for two if that's fine." I said in a forced polite tone with an unconvincing smile. The old hag looked at me for a good moment before she abruptly bursted out.

"YEAH, sure, whatever. That'll be twenty gold." She wasn't in the mood I suppose. Bitch. I pulled out a heavy pouch of gold and carefully picked out twenty gold coins. It was overpriced. After she counted all of the coins with a suspicious look in her eye. She grunted even more as she handed us a room key. I grabbed it and motioned to Hawk to move. We got to the stairs and began walking up the stairs.

"I didn't like that hag." Hawk says quietly.

"No way, you didn't like that nice old lady?" I responded sarcastically. I mocked him, I mean, it was like saying the sun rose today.

"Shut up..." Hawk said.

There we stood, in front of the door of our room. Number seven was on a sign that was nailed to the door. We stepped in. The room stank and the furniture was old. I wouldn't even be surprised if the furniture was made in my time. Hawk leaned his musket against the dresser and laid down on the bed. The bed creaked as Hawk entered it and stretched.

"Woah, this bed is much better than the ones we had in the camp. They always told us that real warriors sleep on the ground." Hawk said after he deeply yawned.

"You are not as demanding as I expected." He chuckled at my response. He didn't know it but I didn't need to sleep. I had to do it for him and just played along. Possessed bodies do not require eating, drinking, or sleeping. Every single one of these actions can be done just for the enjoyment you can get from them. I didn't like sleeping. Or rather waking up, not knowing what would be waiting for me there. I merely avoided death several times just as I woke up. My home, in the forest, in... the flesh pit, and every time after. I was putting down my heavy armor when I noticed that Hawk was already asleep. I thought I could slow down for at least one night. I placed my armor set on the ground beside the bed together with the Spirit Crusher. I quickly washed myself in the bathroom and then looked at myself in the mirror for who knows how long. Was the person in the mirror still me... No.

The person I'm looking at was never me. He had blonde hair and blue eyes, and he was human. We were nothing alike. The sun had set by the time I walked out of the hostel. The night streets of Valor were full of life, and even this part of the city was still pleasant. I was roaming around all of those taverns, drinking up and down, but the alcohol had only a faint effect on me. While I was sitting in one of those taverns I thought I saw someone, I looked around more but couldn't find the person I was looking for. I felt kinda dizzy, but it couldn't have been from the alcohol. It was too sudden, when out of nowhere, there he was sitting at one of the tables. Abyss, The Butcher of Shadowmire. No. I was hallucinating. Abyss died, by my hand. Back then, he was the last one of them. Last ascended mortal of my era. My head hit the hard, wooden table. Some guy asked me if I was okay and I convinced him that it was nothing, he thought I passed out from all of the alcohol. My head rosed up again and I continued with my drinking spree. People around began to notice and were pretty impressed. It felt good, being normal for at least a single night. I felt someone's hand on my shoulder, it was smaller and soft.

“Uuuh, that is impressive honey. You are one tough guy, aren’t ya?” Said a feminine voice from behind me. I looked around, and there stood a half-elf, half-dwarf girl. It was a rare combination but she was gorgeous. In my years I haven’t seen a lot of folks like her. She had lush ginger hair, a cute face, and an attractive figure. She was wearing a black crop top and brown shorts and boots. I was a little... Stunned, flattered, maybe?

“A-Are you a prostitute?” I asked her the mathematically dumbest fucking question I could.

“Hahaha... Actually, I am, I was thinking of not working today, but you are irresistible. Come on, I’ll give you a discount.” She laughed at my stupid question and gave me a “special” offer.

“Heh, s-sure, why not? My name is Arno” I stood up and reached out my hand for a handshake. Instead of shaking my hand, she leaned onto me.

“I’m Thirfarra, but you can call me Thir.” She had the most dwarfish name there was. Don’t get me wrong, she was taller than a normal dwarf due to her elf genes and had elven ears. It was just a little odd, half-dwarf having such a dwarfish name, whatever.

“Do you have a place we could go to honey?” Thir asked.

“Yeah... I-I have a room at a hostel here.” My mind was still foggy. Maybe the alcohol was doing something. I don’t know. I don’t know what I was planning.

As we walked out of the tavern, I noticed a group of three men walk toward us: a human, an orc, and a panther beastman.

“What the fuck? Is that an orc? A giant, orc class. Am I seeing things?” I thought to myself. But I wasn’t seeing things. The trio approached us.

“HEY! What the fuck do you think you’re doing?! That is my girl, you shithead!” The human began yelling at me in the middle of the street. We’ve gotten into a heated argument. I can’t remember all of it but after he yelled at me for a solid moment, the panther beastman grabbed me by my neck and lifted me in the air. I struggled for air, the panther guy was pretty large and was certainly strong since he could lift me up with such ease. I was going to pass out soon. My eyes started slowly closing. Why haven’t I stayed at the hostel? I thought I was a goner before a loud bang rummaged through the nightly streets. Suddenly I was falling to the ground. There was a lot of blood. It took me a good while until I realized that the panther’s hand was gone. The one that held me up. The two other guys were in complete shock. I had hit the ground, hard. It woke me up from whatever state I was in. The beastman began to scream and hold his bleeding arm.

The blood was splattering all around. Then another bang ragged, it landed by the human guy's foot. They began to frantically run down the street. Thir was in shock as well and she ran in the opposite direction while screaming as well. I sat there before I began running as well. I ran all the way back to the hostel we were staying at. I ran past the reception, the old hag wasn't there. I leaned on the door with the number seventeen on it. I was breathing heavily before I opened them and stepped in. It was dark inside. Hawk was sitting on his bed with Spitfire leaning on the bed beside him. I walked in quietly. Hawk stood up from his bed and approached me slowly before he looked up at me. He slapped my face, leaving a pink handprint on my cheek.

"You made me cause more unnecessary violence." Hawk said quietly while looking at the ground. I didn't respond, he was right. I got carried away and now I was facing the consequences of my actions, again. No, that's not the right way to say it. Hawk went back to sleeping and so I laid down on my bed as well. I stared at the ceiling the whole night until it was dawn. Then I waited for Hawk to wake up from his slumber. But after waiting for a good few hours, he continued sleeping. It was late morning by now. I stood up and got to the window. Out of it, you could see the exact spot where I got grabbed last night by the panther guy. There was still his blood on the paved road. I felt guilty when I was thinking about it, so I didn't. I walked over to Hawk and woke him up.

"We have to go find someone willing to take us to Shadowmire, buddy." I told him. He still seemed angry at me but agreed, so I equipped my armor, we took our stuff and we left on our horses.

"Okay so, the plan goes like this. We'll walk around the taverns at the harbor district and ask people about the taking us with them thing."

"If you find someone, firstly offer them four hundred gold, if they refuse, go up by fifties or hundreds up to seven hundred, if they still refuse, leave. Every twenty minutes we'll meet here in case we've found someone."

"Is that clear?" I explained when we arrived at the harbor district. Hawk replied with "Got it." and so we began our search. We've begun riding up and down the harbor district taverns. The first twenty minutes have passed by. We met up a the designated spot.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing."

We went back to seeking. There were a lot of potential folks but even our overkill of an offer didn't please them.



We met up for the second time.

“Nothing??”

“Nothing.”

We continued looking, and seeking, and searching. We met up for the fifth time.

“Nothing???”

“NO! Fucking no one man. There are like a million taverns and like a billion people. But no one is: going to the Shadowmire, has a large ship, is willing to take us, and is pleased with the amount of the gold!” Hawk said, frustrated.

“Why haven’t we gone and printed flyers yesterday?! This sucks!” As I was thinking about how to respond, a shady man approached us.

“Oh, you gentlemen need to get to the Shadowmire? With all of your things?” He meant our horses and weapons. His voice was slimy. He was fat and had a mustache.

“Yeah. Will you take us?” I asked.

“Oh, but it won’t be free, how much do you guys have?” He said with his stinky voice. I felt like I was getting dirtier with each second that I spent speaking to him.

“Six hundred fifty. And we might give you a tip if we enjoy our time riding with you.” We won’t.

“Hmmmm. Well alright, boys. I’m leaving with my crew in a few hours.” Then he proceeded to explain to us where is their ship docked and how is it going to be on board. He said that he and his crew were merchants, what were they shipping? That was questionable. He tried to convince us that they were shipping sugar, cloth, and other things. By the way, most of all sugar comes from Shadowmire.

We wandered around the harbor district until we had only half an hour left. We got to the place the man talked about. The ship that stood before us was big and besides ordinary sails, it also had a steam-powered engine. The combination made it fast, so fast in fact that getting to Shadowmire should have taken only three days. And it did. We rode up the plank to the ship’s board. The slimy man was there talking with his crewmate. He immediately noticed us and ran over.

“Oh hello boys! Welcome aboard!” Mr. Shady ran over to us and greeted us.

Yes, he will be called Mr. Shady from now on. Hawk was clearly uncomfortable, he was weird, but he was willing to take us to Shadowmire. After he was finished talking, he told his crewmates to open up the hold entrance. And so we lead our horses down where we tied them. After that, we found a good spot at the front of the ship. Minutes later, we departed. With Hawk, we watched as the land slowly disappeared behind us. The Middle Sea is a wild and dangerous place, luckily for us, we were only scraping the edge of the sea's center. But that didn't mean that there would be no problems along the way.

**THE END FOR NOW...**

# Whittania's

Spitfire  
Spirit Crusher



COMING EARLY 2024

Dark Knight  
Dark Knight  
Dark Knight