

A Duel with the Dawnservant

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Page 1

It had been a few suns since they arrived in this hot, humid clime. Ashlyn felt just at home within it. She almost seemed revitalized with the heavy, humid air that wasn't all too dissimilar to her own native jungle. Though, today was not a sun for relaxation. Her boots echoed loudly off the stone walls as the Viera walked through the palace to the throne room. Her party in tow, the nerves of what was about to be shown could be felt in the air. Would Ashlyn prevail? Would she lose within seconds? No one knew, and that excited the Rava.

You're going to need me.

No I won't. I will fight him on my own strength.

You idiot, look at him, you have no chance without using our strength.

I have more here than just him and I. I cannot, not with Istrone right there...

Forget the elf, she'll discover what we are soon enough. She already suspects us...

Enough, I said I won't use that.

You fucking stupid bu-

ENOUGH!

The Viera steeled her gaze, sapphire eyes piercing in to the older Mamool Ja. "Gulool Ja Ja. It is my honor to come to you today to duel." She motions grandly before him. Pulling out her gunblade, the Viera smiled. "Sadly, today only one of us will emerge victorious. Let us find out who the better is. My Bozjan arts, or your ancient native Viper arts!" He laughed a full chested bellow. "My my, quite the eager one you are. I am going to enjoy this!" The Mamool Ja replied picking up his monstrous blades. Each one easily the size of the Viera it seemed.

Preparing herself in to her battle stance, the Rava glances over at those who have come to watch. Her squire, Istrone, the small Elezen of only fifteen summers. Asuka, the princess with whom Ashlyn has sworn her life to protect. Entyra, her lieutenant, easily the more book smart of the two officers. Ruby, her Khani and one of the loves of her life. Kira, Ruby's wife and another love of Ashlyn life. Finally, Mizzy, a budding new romantic interest, whom the Rava had become quite interested in. They all have their own feelings about this duel, some excitement, others fear.

The Viera returned her gaze to her opponent. Her fingers flexed on the grip as she wound up her legs, ready to explode at any moment. "I see you brought a small audience little one. Good, good, then let us give them a show, eh?" He laughed heartily once more finally readying himself in to his own battle stance. Despite his advanced age, Ashlyn could feel the years of experience just emanating from him. It was awe inspiring.

Smiling, the Knight-Captain nodded. "Let us not disappoint!" She shouted. Her voice echoing off the stone. Once both got ready, Ashlyn's powerful legs kicked off launching the small body forward. Though, in her haste, Gulool Ja Ja easily read the attack and side stepped. Causing the Viera to slam in to the ground with her blade harmlessly. Using his chance, the mighty Mamool Ja swung with both massive weapons and Ashlyn barely had time to escape.

They slammed in to the ground and kicked up dust, the shockwave the Viera felt was even more inspiring. Upon landing, the Rava immediately launched in to yet another attack. This time, her Thorn sank in and let off an explosion. Gulool Ja Ja tried to retaliate, but his massive foot missed the bunny as she kicked off his body. Landing a few yalms away, the Viera smirked as first blood was hers. She tried to go on the offensive, but as her next swing went wide, the Mamool Ja took

advantage of her miss and smashed her with his thick tail.

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The Rava was thrown back ten yalms slamming directly in to a stone pillar. A loud gasp as the air rapidly escaped her lungs could be heard by all. Falling to the ground, Ashlyn took a moment being dazed. Her opponent wasn't going to let up so soon. Charging forward with speed not like his size, Gulool Ja Ja swung both massive blades but Ashlyn managed to dodge just in the nick of time. In response, she managed to kick off and swung her blade with an almost wild fervor, that even despite his own size, her opponent parried with ease.

Ashlyn landed on the ground and spun to face him. Gulool Ja Ja began laughing. "I can see you're holding back little one. Do not disrespect me. I can feel something within you that you aren't letting loose! FIGHT ME LIKE A WARRIOR!" He roared at her. Ashlyn grit her teeth. How could he see such a thing. "I am giving you everything a Bozjan has. I am holding nothing back!" Gulool Ja Ja shook his head. "Stop lying girl!"

Even your opponent can feel me. Accept it. Accept us. Let me come free. Use our power.

No! I will not! I... can not...

Ashlyn steeled her resolve. Glancing towards the crowd, she heard their cheers, looked upon their faces for various expression from worried, to reveling in the fight as sweat fell from her brow. Time seemed to slow as her gaze moved from face to face. Cheers echoing in her ears, the bunny shifted her gaze back towards her massive opponent to see he had taken advantage of her momentary distraction. His blades slamming in to the spot where she stood just heartbeats before her body reacted vaulting her to safety. The moment the Rava landed, she sprung forward but once more badly missed her aim.

She did not let this deter her. Yet, in her frantic swings to try to prove that she does not need her darkness, the Viera badly missed again to where Gulool Ja Ja barely had to move to dodge. "Ha! Your mind is clouded! Come, give me your all!" He cried swinging his blades together. They connected against Ashlyn's gunblade as it snapped to protect her. Yet the sheer force from the swing still sent her flying backwards. The Rava landed with a hard thud. Standing up, it could be seen by all that Ashlyn was taking a beating. Yet, even as a small bit of blood began to leak from her forehead, the Viera stood defiant against the gargant.

Springing once more in to action, as the Rava wrestled within herself to maintain control. She once more badly missed her target. The pommel of one of the giant blades finds itself buried in to her back. Ashlyn slammed down in to the ground as a result. The Viera took a moment and quickly rolled to the side and up on her feet as a massive foot slammed down right next to where she once was. A flurry of blades came her way, the Viera did her best to parry as many as she could. Yet, even still unable to land a blow herself, the Viera grit her teeth harder.

You will never win without me. Look at how much you're losing. Look at how you're embarrassing yourself in front of your beloved princess, in front of your 'khani', in front of your lovers.

No! You're... you're wrong...

Even you know the truth! Come, embrace us. Embrace what we are. Give him what he wants!

Ashlyn exhaled deeply. She knew Justice was right. She knew that she had to fight him with all of her might. Her eyes closed for a moment.

Fine. I will use it. Only for this, and this is not a sign of things going back to what they were.

Good girl. Just relax, tap in to it and feel the power flow through you once more...

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The Viera exhaled once more, time seemed to move at a standstill as she channeled all her hatred, disdain, and anguish of being unable to defend those she wants to. A malefic aura begins to form around the Viera. Gulool Ja Ja paused for a moment, staring at his quarry. Asuka's own light flared as a shield to protect her once more. Quietly, only loud enough for the two other Viera in place to be able to hear, the princess can be heard gritting her own teeth, stating. "Gods damnit Ash. This better be worth it..." Her amber eyes remained transfixed on where the bunny was.

The flow of darkness seemed to crackle around the Rava. Her muscles reacted, the blood flowing from her forehead became black as the darkest ichor. Through the crowd, a set of mixed reactions could be heard. Entyra stared intently at her superior. Worried if Ash might have done something stupid. Mizzy stared in fear, looking through fingers trying to cover her eyes from what was happening. Ruby stepped in front of Kira, to protect her wife. Just as the others, staring directly at Ash. Everyone seems quite tense watching the Viera begin to unlock herself.

Istrone, grimaced. "...I knew it..." She said softly. "Ser... why won't you just talk to me about it..." Through all of this, the bunny had just focused on keeping her control. The Rava did her best to not lose herself. She may be willing to deal with Justice, but by the twelve, she needed to not let the girl take over. As the Viera opened her eyes. Her sapphire orbs were now ruby red. Yet, even after this change, even as the darkness rippled around her, she was in control indeed. A few of the group watching breathing a collective sigh of relief.

Gulool Ja Ja just began laughing once more. "There we go! Now this is the real you I can feel!" Ashlyn remained staring him down, emotionless as her hand extended to the side. Blade breaking down in to aether. Channeling a little extra of her own, it begins to reform in to the wicked blade that was sitting back in her cabin. The sheer size difference in the weapons seemed to only excite Gulool Ja Ja even more.

Charging in, he swings his twinblades downward. The Rava moves to parry them but this time her counter attack lands a hit upon his arms. Blood is drawn once more in her favor. He goes on the offensive, spinning his blades around to cause her to maintain distance. Drawing deep within the darkness, three bolts of raw crackling energy erupt from her fingertips and make their way in to his body.

Gulool Ja Ja, not expecting that was thrown off balance and the Rava goes on the attack, swinging just to be riposted by the massive brute. The blades connect with her body, the skin was mostly protected by a shimmering purple shield. Yet, her uniform began showing tatters. Ashlyn grimaced as blood began to form under her leather. Cuts forming from all of the hits and near misses. Things she never noticed until just now. Rivers of ichor flowing down her arms. She didn't want to give in though.

Gripping her greatsword with two hands, the Viera dashed forward and leapt skyward just to bring the blade down using a flip to add momentum. Gulool Ja Ja blocked the blow with his arm, and the wicked blade sank within his flesh. Kicking off her quarry, the Viera launched in to a flurry of blows, each one narrowly missing the still quite agile Dawnservant. After her flurry though, the Viera was left off balance. A momentary lapse that he tried to take advantage of.

Yet, the Viera was able to anticipate it. She fell with one of her motions and his own counter attack missed her. Spinning on the ground, the Viera got back up and a large outward burst of dark

energy crackles from her blade as she spun it around. Be it the weapon, or the energy. Something struck him hard.

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Gulool Ja Ja had to take a knee for the first time since this fight began. One of his eyes closed, as the venerable weaponmaster panted hard. The Vow of Reason remained oddly silent still with only the Vow of Resolve being active. Ashlyn paid it no mind. For he was still quite formidable. Were he at his full strength, she most assuredly would have had to channel this much sooner or the fight would have ended much earlier.

Blood almost seemed to flow freely from both of them as they stared each other down. In an explosive move, the combatants dashed to each other. Deflecting and trading blows with one another in a flurry of steel on steel. Yet, try as they might, neither could land a decisive blow.

Hit after hit goes unconnected. This continues for a few minutes more before finally the palace doors slam open. "Dawnservant! I have news about the rite of succession!" A servant shouted amid the clashes of steel. Hearing this, he backed off. Ashlyn recognized the sign to stop fighting and paused herself. "Ha Ha! I rarely get to enjoy this as I have these past days! First that man Estinien, then that adventurer from across the sea. Now you! I thank you friend. You are indeed a worthy adversary."

There was a weariness to his voice, but even as his rumble calmed down and he moved to the throne to be mended and deal with his news. Ashlyn nodded. "And you are all the fighter I could have wished to duel against. Thank you for letting me test myself against you. I fear how it would have turned out had you still had the vigor of your youth." The Viera responded. Though her voice was not just her own. There was almost a twinned quality to it.

Before anyone could worry though, Ashlyn had closed her eyes. The aura died down, her blade shattered and reformed back in to her Thorn. As the bunny opened them once more, they were back to their calm deep blue again. Bowing, she began walking away before stumbling for a moment. Though, thanks to her entourage. There was no shortage of help to get the bunny back to her own cabin and mended.

As she walked away, Gulool Ja Ja just smiled at her. Knowing that deep within her heart beat the heart of a warrior who reveled in combat just as much as he...