

The Barbarian's Side (Part 1)

by Jonathan Munsterman

"We are agreed then?" A large man with an eye-patch growled, his finger drumming on the rough wood top of the table.

"600 gold pieces. That will last until the 7th day of the 9th month, then the deal is done." A tall, lean man responded. His chainmail jingled as he shifted in his seat.

"600 and whatever I can do to honor you fallen leader. It is the least I can do." With a nod, the large man extended a hand and the two clasped wrists to seal the deal. "Travel well, Grease."

"And you too, Thoren" replied the tall man as he left the tavern.

Both men left the dark tavern silently, leaving a separate way. "Thoren, I am not sure if that was wise, how do we know we can trust a group of barbarians?" A concerned woman appeared from her waiting place.

"Talia, relax," replied Thoren. "I was on good terms with their past leader, his men are trust worthy else he would not have let them in his clan. If they have half the honor and skill he did, then trust me....the money is well spent. And we are going to need it." The two of them walked into the darkness toward the lighted ribbon of smoke rising in the distance.

Elsewhere, a young woman walked along Grease's side. "How much was the agreement?" she asked.

"600 pieces of gold and more in memory of The Barbarian," said Grease as he stopped and faced the woman. "Sashra, do you think he would have wanted us to work with these people? Gypsies have never been considered to be good business associates." The two silently reflected for a moment.

Sashra nodded, "Yes, he would have."

With a light sigh, Grease Lugnut, adjusted his grip on his sword and the two continued to walk on. "Alright, seems as if they need a teacher for their new recruits, he asked me to handle it."

Sashra looked up at her brother. "Just be sure not to let it get out of control, we only have so much time to commit to training them."

With a grin, Grease laughed to himself. "At least they have to learn against me, and not our past leader, no one would have passed his test." The two laughed as they returned to their encampment.

They greeted Morgan as they entered. The thin woman was busy at her forge, smithing out masses of weapons. Her head covered in a fox fur cap, matching her hair color. Rack upon rack of weapons were stacked around her, all filled with gleaming blades ready for use. Farther in, Sashra and Grease heard blades clashing loudly. "Sounds like Orso is in a good mood," said Grease.

"Or bad," replied Sashra. Grease grinned and they walked back.

A big man with broad shoulders, wearing a black bear hide on his back, wielding a axe and a buckler was fighting with a man of almost equal size who was using a long sword and box shield. With a wave, Grease called out to the two combatants, "Orso! Demox! The deal is on!" With a quick salute of their weapons, the two men grinned back at Grease then continued with the fight.

Sashra stayed to watch the fighting as Grease continued on. "Horus! Aldanis! You two around?" Grease yelled out. Two men walked up to Grease, one slightly shorter than the other, both could be mistaken for brothers. "The deal is on, be ready to fight and train some fresh blood." Grease clapped Aldanis on the shoulder, the sound of the steel armor he wore clanged at the contact.

"I'll let the others know," said one of the men.

Grease gave a quick nod, "Good Horus. Get too it!" With a small salute, Horus ran off.

Easing open a tent flap, Grease peered inside, "Sage? You around?"

"Maybe," graveled voice from the shadows behind him. "Depends on what you have to tell me?" A white skull moved into the light of the fire.

"GREAT HAMMER OF FIRE!!" Grease shouted as he stumbled back, startled by the ghoulish sight.

"Like it?" said Sage. "An orc gave it to me!" his tattered leather making him seem like he had just ran through a field of blackthorns.

"Gave it to you? You sure you it wasn't your charm or your way of persuasion which convinced him to lend you're his FACE?!" asked Grease.

"Yeah, he liked me so much he said 'here have it, I don't need it anymore'," chuckled Sage.

"Not bad, but listen, we have a special task." Grease explained. "First, the deal with the gypsies is on; second, you and I are needed to help escort some spirit."

Sage's eyes lit up at the mention of money. "We're getting paid for that right?!"

"Yes we will, but just us two. So keep it quiet." Grease continued. "Plus there may be some fighting along the way. We have to watch for some folk in masks and black cloaks. Call

themselves Draco Disciples. Supposedly, they have a lot of numbers but no skill in fighting, which is a boost for us."

Sage cackled and entered the tent, "I'll get my saber sharpened and ready for the kill. Now get in here, you still have to beat me at Barbarian chess!"

With a low laugh, Grease followed the skull masked man in. "Alright, but this time I get to be the one going after the pointy hat men!"