

Graveyard Shift

There was a house on a hill in the city of Nightvale which was greatly feared by the inhabitants. There was nothing unusual about it, there were no eerie lights in the window nor gargoyles leering down on passer-by's. In fact it was a very pleasant looking three storey abode with magnificent views across the harbour. The gardens were well tended and in full bloom with a variety of colours and scented flowers that sent a floral fragrance through the surrounding streets. There were even two well-groomed cats who paraded around the grounds in feline superiority.

Many folk took a wide berth of the house, some even refused to walk down the same street muttering to others that it was a cursed place. If you found the right merchant he would tell you a story of who lived there although to catch a sight of the owner was a rare thing indeed. The same man would tell you the owner was over three hundred years old yet appeared no older than thirty winters. He would also whisper in your ear she was a sorceress of great power who seduced young boys and ate their hearts while in copulation.

Young Tadbob stood looking up at the house wishing he had never spoken to the old merchant in the first place. Now he had got spooked by a stupid story that probably wasn't true anyway. Unlike many others, he knew exactly who lived here and he knew she preferred to keep to herself to avoid any misunderstandings in the city. He had only been here once before when delivering a package from the Guild. That time his orders were to leave it by the door but this time he had been instructed to deliver something personally.

Tadbob had to admit he was caught between curiosity and fear which was emphasised by his shaking fingers as he gripped the black wax scroll holder. By trade he was a messenger and had been working for the Guild in Nightvale for the entire summer. It paid well and they fed him which he couldn't grumble about but there was something far too secretive which bordered on dangerous about his deliveries.

His current consignment was a scroll tube which looked ordinary enough but it felt cold and a little clammy to the touch. Every time he adjusted his grip, a shiver went up

his spine as if something was sending warning signals scurrying across his nerves. He hadn't told the other messengers back at the Guild about who lived here, he had been sworn to secrecy by the administrator and warned that opening his mouth would have dire consequences.

The first time he was here, he had caught a glimpse of the owner at the third storey window, only briefly but enough to recognize her. Portraits hung proudly in the Guild halls of their top hunters over the decades and hers was there among some of the finest.

Her name was Mariesse and she was a Necromancer of some renown.

Tadbot had been lucky enough to sneak into the Guild archives one evening and found out as much as he could about her. Surprisingly she was mentioned little in the recent histories but her name appeared more and more frequently the further he tracked back thorough the archives. He had stopped at three hundred and fifty years ago thinking that the old merchant's stories may be right. If he had been right about her

age then perhaps he was right about her eating young men's hearts as well.

He almost jumped out of his skin as one of cats rubbed its furry body against his leg to snap him from his reverie. He took two steps back much to the cat's displeasure who scowled at him and hissed menacingly before skulking off with its tail raised in disgust. Tadbob took a deep breath and approached the front door of the house. It looked normal enough, no twisted face or undead slime coated the surface.

The street was empty as it often was in this part of the city. Very few travelled these roads near the Necromancer house for fear of getting their souls sucked out or used for some form of sinister experiment. Tadbob had only one way of finding out if the rumours were true and that was to deliver the scroll tube to its destination.

After spending another minute trapped in his own thoughts his body moved and he raised a hand to knock at the door. His hand didn't even touch the wooden surface before he heard a click and it swung open smoothly before him in invitation. Tadbob's

eyes nearly bugged out of his head at what lay within. If he hadn't known better he would have thought he was looking into the private chambers of a royal queen.

Opulent furnishings unlike anything he had ever seen before graced the entire room. Ruffled crimson silk drapes edged with gold trim decorated the windows and entry ways and finely carved wooden chairs plumply padded with pearl dust satin fabric were neatly arranged around the ground floor. Two large paintings hung on the walls, one was particularly breath taking which depicted the city harbour in painstaking detail. The other was of a realistic looking field of red flowers that looked like you would be able to reach in and pluck one of the petals right off the stalks.

As Tadbob was admiring the paintings, he realized he had taken several steps inside the house and the door was swinging shut behind him. He panicked momentarily and raced towards it, almost getting his fingers trapped in the doorframe. The door latched into place and no amount of rattling and pulling would open it.

Tadbot thought this was the moment that the room would begin to change and all the wonderful furnishing would melt before his eyes and reveal themselves to be twisted, rotten things with no life in them.

No matter how hard he stared, nothing changed. In fact the more he looked, the more wonders he saw. A spectacular brass statue of a dragon with jade eyes was in one corner and, in another, a large fist sized ruby enclosed in a glass pedestal. The ceiling was painted as well, an impressive fresco detailing the battle between gods and mortals.

Just as he thought the room was going to burst his mind from a cultural overload, a soft sigh filled the room. He glimpsed something out the corner of his eye and spun quickly to see what it was. There was only set of stairs leading up to the second storey, nothing more. As he stood there gazing upwards, wondering if he should investigate, another sigh buzzed around his ears.

It was so strong he actually battered his ears in annoyance as if a swarm of flies had attacked him.

‘Please don’t dawdle young man,’ a disembodied voice droned inside his head. It sounded like an echo from far away but it was definitely a woman’s voice.

Tadbot took a step back and then forward and then spun around in a dance of confusion that caused the voice in his head to chuckle. ‘Come up the stairs. Don’t worry, I don’t bite!’

It sounded cheerful enough but Tadbot was not used to being spoken to by a person who wasn’t in the same room as him. So he opened his mouth and tried to speak but no recognizable sounds came from his mouth.

‘Oh do hurry my boy. You have something for me?’ The voice asked politely.

‘Urghhhh,’ Tadbot responded and then thought it would just be better to nod his head which was silly because nobody was in the room with him.

‘Good!’ The voice trilled lightly. ‘Now, if you would be so kind as to make your way up the stairs?’

Tadbot took some faltering steps and made it up two of the stairs. The voice congratulated him pleasantly, ‘That’s it! Up we go! All the way!’

He graciously obeyed the command although his legs felt like they didn’t belong to him. When he got halfway up the voice buzzed inside his head once again.

‘I do hope you like my house. Did you like downstairs?’ Tadbot went to answer but the voice carried on before he could even grunt a reply. ‘The dragon was from a land far to the east called Nagaska. The ruby was a gift from the Dwarves of Stonecrag for helping them to dispose of a particularly unpleasant rock fiend.’

Tadbot listened dumbly to the voice until he got to the top of the stairs and a landing area with a corridor lined with closed doors.

‘This way young man, if you please. You don’t want to go into any of those rooms.’ The voice encouraged and Tadbot’s body

responded by walking straight down the corridor and around the corner to another staircase.

‘Come now, you are almost there,’ the voice was sounding less disembodied now, the tone was clearer and more precise than it had been.

Tadbot reached the third storey which was a massive open plan room even more striking than the downstairs area had been. His eyes could barely take in everything he was seeing. Display cases filled with all manner of precious metals and valuable jewels filled the room in neat rows. The walls were exquisitely wood panelled a deep rich brown colour and the floor appeared to be black marble flecked with gold.

Tadbot thought that if you took a prized trophy from every king in the land then it would not match the treasures that lay before him. Breath-taking was an understatement which also made him realize he was literally holding his. He sucked in a big lungful of air and snorted like a farmyard animal.

On the far side of the room was a high back chair of red fabric that was almost as tall as him. It was facing a slightly open window that spilled soft shards of light into the room and the gentle chorus of birdsong could be heard from outside. He felt a presence was sitting in that chair but he could not see them from where he was standing.

An elegant hand drifted into view from one side of the tall chair. It was pale but flawless with two elaborate golden sheaths decorating the index and middle fingers. The hand beckoned him and the sweetest voice he had ever heard spoke to him.

‘Come my boy, come over here.’

It was the same voice he had first heard downstairs but this time it was not in his head. He was hearing it with his own ears for the first time. Life seemed to flood back into his legs and a small wave of nausea passed over him. Perhaps it was best to get this over with and leave the house as soon as possible. He had never experienced anything like this in his life and he wasn’t sure if he wanted to ever again.

He walked briskly towards the chair, being careful not to knock one of the priceless looking treasures to the ground in his haste. There was a small incense holder burning on a desk under the window which gave the room a sweet fragrance of apples and cinnamon. Tadbob eventually rounded on the owner of the house and came face to face with Mariesse the Necromancer for the first time.

She was sat cross legged in the high backed chair and was dressed in a sheer black ankle length dress. The middle of the dress was a plunging v-line that exposed the sides of her breasts but a clinging black webbing hugged the skin there to keep it together. What looked like long grey coloured bones decorated her back and shoulders – it looked to Tadbob like a giant skeletal hand was about to engulf her.

Pretty jewels decorated her neck and forehead where a crown of sorts rested. It was a thing of bladed grey iron set with white gleaming stones that also functioned as an impressive looking headband to keep her long hair from her face. Her hair was an interesting shade of violet, perfectly styled

without a hair out of place. She looked just like her picture in the Guild hall although her eyes were closed in that picture. They were closed now as well.

‘Welcome young man,’ her lips moved softly but her eyes remained closed. ‘I do hope you aren’t scared?’

Tadbot wanted to answer but instead he stared at her breasts as they gently strained against her dress as she breathed. Just as he thought he had plucked up the courage to answer her she raised a hand to silence him as if she had sensed he was about to speak.

‘Do you hear that?’ she asked, tilting her head gently to one side.

Tadbot listened and heard the faint lilt of musical instruments and song. Sometimes troubadours performed near the docks as part of a local mummers group. He cleared his throat and mustered up his first words in what seemed like an age.

‘The music?’ It came out a more high pitched than he wanted, hardly manly.

‘Yes! The music!’ Mariesse smiled briefly as she began to tap a foot to the far away rhythm. ‘I do so love music! I was thinking of having a large feast in the city with music and troubadours on every street corner. What do you think?’

Tadbot blinked, was he swapping small talk with a rather ad intimidating woman? *Remember she will eat your heart!* A small voice reminded him in his head. This time he thought it was his own conscience at least and not the disembodied voice of the Necromancer.

Mariesse continued when he never replied. ‘You are scared of me aren’t you boy?’

Tadbot shook his head, ‘Eh, n-no.’

‘No? But I can sense it my boy. It’s very rude to lie to a lady in her own home.’

He should have apologised but the next words came blurting out. ‘Can you read my mind?’

She laughed at that, waving the fingers of one hand idly in the air. ‘More than that, I can sense your soul.’

Tadbot flinched as a teacup and saucer floated past his shoulder towards the Necromancer. She plucked it from the air and took a small tip of steaming liquid.

‘You can see my soul?’ Tadbot asked.

‘I can,’ she took another sip and then rested the cup on the arm of her chair. ‘Whatever has that silly merchant been telling you now? Is it the one about me eating young boy’s hearts?’

Tadbot nodded, afraid to speak and began to perspire quite excessively. ‘Yes.’

‘Pay no heed to him, he was a Guild member once but I had him thrown out for stealing. Now tell answer me again boy, are you afraid of me?’

Tadbot gathered himself, this could be test – perhaps she would have him promoted if he showed no fear. ‘No my lady,’ he answered in the strongest voice he could muster.

‘Really?’ She asked in amusement and slowly opened her eyes.

Tadbot fell onto his backside and shimmied up against the wall. Her eyes were completely white, not the white of cataracts of a blind woman but shining white like she had a thousand trapped souls swimming behind her sockets. She stood and walked towards him, a belt of skulls at her waist gnashed their teeth at him and the bone spikes on her back twitched and danced in anticipation.

He closed his eyes, whimpering as he braced himself for his soul to get sucked right out from his body. When he dared open one eye slightly Mariesse was still standing over him with a hand outstretched.

‘You have something for me?’ She asked pleasantly.

Tadbot remembered the scroll tube in his hand and quickly slapped it into her palm a little too firmly. She did not complain though and turned on her heels, unsealing the tube and rolling out the parchment before reseating herself to read the contents.

Her face remained impassive throughout and she rolled the parchment up when

finished and popped it back into its wax tube. 'Well, well, well,' she murmured sipping at her tea. 'That sounds like quite a challenge.'

Tadbot had somehow managed to half stand by sliding his body up the wall like a giant slug but now she was looking at him again.

'Tell the Guild, I accept and will leave post haste,' Mariesse informed Tadbot who nodded frantically in relief.

The Necromancer was up out of her chair and gliding around the room fussing with the many treasures and splendours on display. She eventually brought forth a ghastly looking bone staff that looked like the spinal column of a great beast with a demonic horned skull capping it.

'You will tell them my boy, won't you?' She didn't wait for him to reply. 'And don't try to sneak any of the treasures out, they are all cursed unfortunately. I keep them here to control them.'

Tadbot quickly took his hands off of a small table he was leaning up against. Mariesse

turned her back and made several elaborate hand gestures before speaking in a tongue that sounded like the most awful, ear rending language in the world. Each syllable seemed to scrape his soul and scratch at his skin with grim holistic violence.

A blazing flash of light blinded him temporarily and when he had regained his vision a huge glowing hex symbol hung suspended in the room with a glowing portal at the centre that resembled a churning whirlpool. The wails from the portal sounded like hell itself was about to be unleashed and Tadbob thought momentarily of throwing himself out the window.

Mariesse walked calmly towards the portal with her staff at her side, her dress and hair whipping around as some unearthly gale that reeked of mouldy earth and rotten things howled through the room. As her body passed through there was another flash and the hex symbol vanished as if it had never been there. Tadbob stared agape at what he had just witnessed.

Then he laughed.

Then he ran.

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A soul portal was a complex discipline of arcane magic to conjure but Mariesse had mastered it many centuries ago. It allowed her to travel from place to place in the blink of an eye and made the job of chasing bounties a little bit easier. There was one slight drawback to using soul portals though.

The transfer of her body from one place to another tugged at her physical form. It was the lost souls trapped in limbo that were drawn to the living and would constantly prod, tug and barge just to touch a physical form once again. If one lost concentration then they would be trapped in limbo with no way out.

Mariesse never lost concentration but she was rather annoyed that their fingers snagged her dress which had been woven from the skin of a Shadow Demon and was a potent ward against many forms of black magic. Her body hurtled through the portal

and then a bright flash signalled her arrival at her destination. A huge hex symbol formed in the sky as she softly descended, her dress shredded into fragments, the bits whirling around her like a tornado of black flies.

Her feet touched the ground and the hex faded, the portal closing in upon itself with a wail of torture as limbo once again swallowed the souls trapped there. Mariesse stood there for a moment, her slender body exposed after her clothing had been ripped to pieces. She sighed and struck the ground with her bone staff firmly. Instantly, the pieces of the Shadow Demon dress glowed and began to merge and stick to her body.

She started to walk forward, the dress gradually reforming as she casually strolled along surveying her surroundings. A rather imposing graveyard lay before her, the stone walls and iron railings were crumbling and rusted in sympathy for the decomposing inhabitants beneath the earth. An oppressive iron grey sky loomed overhead, a rumble of thunder adding to the despair of this place.

Mariesse could feel the age of the graveyard, there were ancient spirits here and the things in the ground had been dead a very long time. Even the few trees that were dotted around the grounds were devoid of leaves and resembled dark husks of their former glory. The grass was a colourless carpet of dead vegetation mixed with dirt and mud. Some inscription on the tombs and headstones were barely visible anymore such was the age of the stone.

This was a sad place which was unsurprising to Mariesse. It was just like Lord Kolvuk to choose such a miserable place to reside. She had to admit that when she read his letter Tadbot had delivered it seemed rather unusual. The bounty was from Lord Kolvuk himself, asking her to battle him. She would have laughed had it not been so desperate. Kolvuk was an old vampire and adversary who was clearly waning and needed a potent source of power to drain to sustain him.

It was most certainly a trap but Mariesse was intrigued. Kolvuk had been quiet for almost a century when Mariesse had last taken down a brood of his which had been

terrorizing the countryside. He had slipped from her grasp then but not before killing several of her friends and Guild members. He had killed and enslaved too many over the course of history and now it was time to claim his undead heart once and for all.

Kolvuk was old but extremely dangerous. Every vampire had a unique dark art and his was Necromancy. The graveyard would provide some suitable soldiers for his own protection. He had always preferred to skulk underground while his minions done the work for him. Using undead puppets was not really Mariesse's style, she much preferred using the Necrotic arts for more creative purposes.

Still, there was no point in delaying the inevitable, if this was a trap then Mariesse intended to spring it sooner rather than later. Kolvuk would not make an appearance unless he knew she was under pressure. She flipped her staff in her hands and touched the demonic skull to the ground. The eye sockets blazed an infernal red for a few seconds before a shockwave of power made the ground tremble.

Mariesse spun her staff upright again and prepared herself. That would be sure to get Kolvuk's attention. She waited patiently as a fine mist began to seep from the ground, the incorporeal tendrils caressing and grasping at her ankles. One of the skulls at her waist chattered angrily and the mist withdrew although much of it still seethed on the ground and it was becoming thicker.

The mist continued to swell until it was waist high and only the tops of some of the gravestones were visible. Kolvuk knew she was here alright and he was trying to blind her before launching an attack. She could already sense movement in the ground and the unmistakable noise of churning earth as the undead were summoned. Low moans and shuffling feet were all around her as corpses made their way out of their graves to the bidding of their master.

Mariesse could barely see a few yards in front of her as the mist rose and turned the walking dead into dark shadows ambling towards her. She didn't need to see physical forms though, her glowing eyes could see the threads that linked each corpse like a puppet string. There were

literally dozens of them all interconnecting in a tangled mess. If she followed the threads then they would lead to Kolvuk but there were too many to reliably follow. She would need to thin the ranks of zombies to track the cowardly vampire lord.

Two of them were close behind her so she turned and waved a hand in a slicing motion which severed their threads and sent them collapsing in a heap. Another two followed approaching from her left. There was a distant hiss in the air and the other zombie silhouette paused. A clattering sound came rushing towards her and Mariesse just side stepped in time as a skeleton swung a rusty blade past her face. She jabbed the head of her staff into its ribcage and the force shattered it into pieces.

Another two came at her from each side but she parried their blows with her staff, spinning away and knocking the skull clean off of one and taking the legs from the other. The zombies were moving again, rotten arms grasping for her through the mist but she evaded them, forcing a breach in their advance with a shockwave from her staff.

She went to work severing the ties that bound them to Kolvuk as bodes dropped in heaps everywhere. She didn't want to completely destroy the poor shambling things. Mariesse knew they were innocent pawns in this and the dead, however briefly reanimated, would feel terrible pain in the afterlife if she used certain powers.

As she moved around the headstones, another figure moved with her, something quick and strong. She caught a brief glimpse of a burning red and black aura which must be Kolvuk. So he had finally made an appearance. He kept well out of range of her and began using his undead soldiers as if they were rocks in a catapult.

Half a skeleton was hurled towards her out of the mist like an arrow. She did not have time to react quickly enough and its bony hands clamped onto the front of her dress. Out of instinct, she dropped her staff and gripped its slimy skull in both hands. It slid down her front, ripping her dress down the middle which made her breasts burst free from the torn fabric.

More pieces of undead were hurled at her from all angles like a storm of body parts. Arms, guts, legs and even heads bombarded her body and she was forced to retreat behind a large tomb to escape the barrage. Kolvuk had certainly learned some new tactics since last they met.

Undead flesh smacked against the stone as she prepared her next move, she had the perfect surprise for her old vampire nemesis but she didn't see a big zombie moving up behind her. It had grabbed her hair in vice like fingers before she could finish her next attack. She gasped as the zombie pulled her to her feet and threw her body to one side like she weighed no more than a feather.

Her body hit some rusted railings hard and kept going. She hit dirt and rolled down a steep slope where she eventually came to rest in a pool of mud. Instantly, her senses were assaulted by a thousand terrible moans and she forgot the pain in her own body momentarily as she clamped her hands over her ears to try and stem the flood of noise.

She must have landed in a mass grave, the sheer amount of voices and screams of suffering were almost too much to bear. Something awful must have happened here for so many spirits to be trying to reach out to her. They were sapping her strength though, she was doing everything she could not to be overwhelmed by the sheer ferocity of their torment.

Mariesse needed to get out but as she was crawling through the mud she looked up to see the big zombie had followed her down and its large fist backhanded her across the face. She fell back dazed and blinked dirty mud water from her eyes. As she went to rise, the mass grave came to life, hands erupted from the ground to seize her arms and legs. Rotten fingers probed her mouth and nose and mauled her breasts as she was held firmly to the ground. They filled her head with noise and whispers of punishment as the big zombie approached.

He was a bloated, bald thing with skin the colour of sour milk, blotched with green fungus. He wore a scraggly loin cloth which slipped away as it approached. Mariesse gasped at the swollen piece of flesh

dangling between its legs. It was twice the size of a normal human penis and was engorged with all manner of corruption and foulness.

The zombie began tearing at the lower half of her dress, exposing her upper thighs and genitalia to the creature. She kicked with her legs but more hands crept from the earth to hold her as the zombie knelt between her legs. She looked on in revulsion as the thing positioned the blackened head of its erection against her vagina and began to push.

The sickening shaft slowly penetrated her as the zombie used its weight to bury its dead flesh inside of her. Mariesse gritted her teeth but she would not cry out, she would not give Kolvuk the satisfaction of hearing her scream. Instead she attempted to calm the spirits in the mass grave as best she could by reaching out to them.

It was difficult as the zombie thrust roughly inside her, its unholy organ battering her insides. It drooled over her breasts, green saliva oozing from its mouth as it squeezed

both jiggling orbs as if it were trying to crush them like melons.

She could see its thread emanating from its broad back, but she could not sever it while her limbs were being held. Mariesse would have to try a risky piece of magic to get herself free of this situation. Her eyes sparkled and small white lights danced around her and the graveyard.

The zombie grunted when it saw them and growled at her. It tried to cover her face with a big hand and pushed her head back further into the mud while it increased its incessant pounding between her legs. The sound of their flesh slapping together sounded like the most revolting thing in the world to Mariesse. It had not prevented the magic from leaving her body though, even now a purifying light was reaching into the ground and soothing the spirits.

The noise in her head reduced which amplified her physical pain even more. More and more lights pinged around, diving into the ground and forcing a few of the hands to release her. The zombie growled again, half rising and gripping her waist so it could

hammer into her. She felt her powers waning as so many souls demanded her attention but it was working.

She smiled up at the zombie as it drooled on her and she wrapped her legs tightly around it and dug her heels into its back. It moaned and fell on top of her, knocking the breath out of her in a great whoosh. She had it in position though as she severed its thread and the dirty thing slumped lifelessly on her, its penis shrivelling and slipping out with a flurry of unnatural juices.

Now she couldn't breathe at all with so much bulk on top of her so she gripped its head and sunk her thumbs into both eye sockets, bursting the milky orbs so pus and jelly ran down her arms. She shouted a few dark words of magic into its face and the big zombie began to wither and shrink as all the flesh on its body dried into a husk.

Mariesse kicked the thing off of her and got to her knees. The mass grave still wasn't purified but there was nothing she could do to stop it now. She felt terribly weak at expending so much energy, she doubted she would be able to get to her feet.

She didn't have to though, a hand gripped her hair and began to drag her back up the slope.

A guttural voice spoke to her through the mist, 'I am going to make you pay for this you bitch!'

Kolvuk had finally arrived.

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It would have been easy for Mariesse to close her eyes and drift away to avoid the torment of Kolvuk. His very touch sent a web of pain along her skin that felt like insect bites. The smell emanating from him was like a thousand rotten things mixed with damp earth. She tried to send a wave of dark energy into his face to loosen his grip but it only glanced his shoulder. In annoyance, he howled and lifted her from ground by hair before slamming her back down.

The breath blasted from her body and she hugged her legs to her chest to make herself a smaller target. Kolvuk raised a foot but Mariesse rolled away before it could stamp down on her. She quickly got to one

knee and flung her arms out straight. Green fire burst from her fingertips to hit her nemesis in the face and chest.

Kolvuk stumbled back under the barrage, raising his arms and snarling at her through the unnatural flames. Although he was ancient, Kolvuk was no weak and withered thing. He stood nearly seven feet tall and his face was more bestial than humanoid. Vampires grew more animalistic and primal as they get older. Kolvuk resembled something more like a giant bat that could walk upright and possessed immense strength.

Great leathery wings were tucked in at his back and a dark, coarse fur covered parts of his body as if he were some grim fusion of man and animal. His human roots had long since abandoned him, he had forgotten what it was like to be among the living. He had not been this strong the last they had met and Mariesse was fading as Kolvuk advanced.

A heavily muscled forearm swung at her head which she ducked just in time. She broke off from bombarding him with the

green fire, it was only delaying him and doing no real harm apart from scorching his skin. Kolvuk extended one great wing, edged with deadly spines, and swept it low towards Mariesse's legs.

She jumped the lethal strike but Kolvuk countered quickly by catching her foot and twisting her mid-air. Mariesse landed face down, her breasts taking much of the impact. The vampire yanked her up by the ankle and pulled her dangling form close so they were face to face. She saw his teeth resembled needled daggers as his maw opened and a black tongue emerged to lick at her face.

She sent out a high pitched scream that sent a shockwave down his throat. The vampire dropped her and staggered back down the slope. While she lay there, she quickly summoned a ghostly skull in front of her and sent its chattering form into his chest before he could recover. This time Kolvuk went down, thrashing on the ground and cursing her in the language of the dead.

Mariesse was up, her naked form running through the mist as she tried to locate her

staff. She would need the channelling power if she had any chance of defeating Kolvuk. A few zombies still wandered around the graveyard but Mariesse tried to avoid them as best she could. There was no reason to waste further energy on Kolvuk's minions. If she cut the head of the snake then they would all fall.

As she hunted, she heard the vampire lord behind her, his massive body leapt up from the mass grave and landed behind, wings outstretched in a ferocious display of dominance. Mariesse sensed her staff nearby and turned to retrieve but something caught her legs and she was tumbling to the ground once again.

This time, she did not rise as her legs would not move. She looked down to see black webbing around her feet and ankles. It was underworld webbing, a sticky substance that Necromancer's used to hold their captives. Mariesse reached down to try and dissolve but Kolvuk was too quick. He seized her wrists and spewed more of the webbing from his mouth to bind her arms.

The vampire lord stepped back then, rubbing his injured chest and looking down on the all but helpless Mariesse. A low growl came from his throat which eventually turned into a rumbling laugh.

‘So, the mighty Mariesse has fallen.’ He spat on the ground next to her, the earth briefly sizzling where it settled.

‘Underworld webbing is such a cheap trick lord Kolvuk,’ Mariesse replied offering her bound hands. ‘I wish I could agree but I have not fallen yet.’

Kolvuk lowered his face to hers. ‘You were foolish to come here. I knew you would be too arrogant to refuse. I have been waiting a long time for this.’

‘You have got stronger but a graveyard full of minions against one woman is hardly fair is it?’

‘Silence! I have got stronger! I have thought about your punishment every day since you destroyed my brood all those years ago.’

‘Nothing better to do?’

A backhanded blow knocked Mariesse on her back and rattled her teeth in her head. 'Let's see if we can put that smart mouth to a better use!'

Mariesse shook her head to clear the stars from her vision and saw Kolvuk standing with his legs either side of her. She was staring right up between them where a large leathery sac hung and began to stir. A thick rope of flesh slithered out like a slimy snake and quivered in anticipation. It was coated in some kind of fluid that dripped onto her naked body in small droplets.

It was a perfect opportunity for Mariesse to strike but as she opened her mouth for another banshee shriek, Kolvuk thrust his groin at her face, His member slid into her mouth and down her throat cutting off the attack. The vampire held it there while Mariesse gagged and choked, her airways blocked. It tasted of rotten eggs and stagnant water and she did everything she could not to vomit.

As her eyes filled with tears, Kolvuk withdrew his member so she could draw a breath. She coughed and spluttered as he

grew fully erect and forced it back into her mouth again. The strong vampire held her head in his two huge hands and began thrusting with his hips. The intense deep throat was repulsive and Kolvuk took Mariesse to near unconsciousness four times before he stopped.

Her form was drained by then, her breath was coming between racking fits of coughing and wheezing. Kolvuk enjoyed that as he knelt over her stomach and pushed his large manhood between her heaving breasts. He kneaded them and twisted her nipples hard to make her flinch. All the time he moved his member between her glorious mounds, leaving a trail of slimy residue.

Just before Mariesse could recover enough composure to launch a revenge attack, Kolvuk was up and pulling her along the ground by her hands. They did not go far, the vampire hoisted her up painfully and threw her across something cold and slightly wet front ways. Looked like he had bent her over a tomb but Mariesse had no time to analyse it.

Kolvuk roughly spread her buttocks and rudely thrust his stinking erection into her. Mariesse cried out as the rank phallus violated her insides and squirmed around like it had a mind of its own. The remaining zombies had gathered around on the peripherals of the area, watching their master have his fun.

Kolvuk grunted and drove into her as hard as he could, snarling and grunting all the time. Mariesse tried not to give him the satisfaction of hearing her cry out but she was too tight for such rough behaviour.

'I told you I would get you,' Kolvuk chuckled. 'This is just the beginning. I done this to all your friends before I killed them.'

Mariesse did not reply, instead she closed her eyes and began to reach out.

'I tricked you into coming here. Now I will fuck you for a hundred years before I give you to my minions to enjoy.'

When she did not respond, Kolvuk increased his intense pounding, grabbing a fistful of her and yanking up so her back arched painfully. It still did not break her

trance, she had almost found what she was seeking.

‘You will bow to me as your master. I may parade you through the city streets on a leash like an obedient dog!’

Mariesse’s eyes snapped open and she let out a long sigh. Kolvuk made a strangled sound as he felt Mariesse’s vaginal muscles tighten like a clamp, almost crushing his phallus. He let go of her hair and tried to withdraw himself to no avail. She looked back at him and smiled, her burning white eyes bored into him.

‘The thing is my dear old Kolvuk, it is you who has been tricked.’

The vampire looked up to see a demonic skull looking at him with burning red eyes. Before he could blink, Mariesse’s staff impaled Kolvuk in the stomach. She raised her hands just enough for her staff to slice through the bindings on her hands as it skewered the vampire lord.

Kolvuk’s previously proud erection wilted pathetically and slipped out of her like an unpleasant worm. The demon staff had torn

through Kolvuk's back and the vampire was standing there completely stunned. Mariesse reached down and dissolved the webbing at her feet with a few gesture and then punched Kolvuk full in the face. It did not do much damage but the satisfaction value was high.

This time, Mariesse acted first before Kolvuk and she howled in a forbidden language before pointing at the vampire lord. She ducked as barbed spikes shot from the ground and impaled his arms and legs, trapping him in an awkward position. He was breathing hard and beginning to panic.

The zombies around the area began to drop as he lost his control on them and attempted to absorb some power back. Mariesse would not hear of it though and one of her fingerings sprouted into a blade. She rushed forward and placed it between Kolvuk's legs who opened his mouth to protest.

Instead a howl came out as Mariesse slit his sac and reached in to pull out his genitals. She sent green fire racing up his scrotum

as his private parts burned and cooked. They would heal in time but it still didn't stop him feeling pain for a little while.

Mariesse stood there before the great vampire lord as he thrashed his huge head in pain. Now it was her turn to mock him.

'I do appreciate your offer dear Kolvuk but I must decline. You see, I find you absolutely fucking disgusting.'

With that, Mariesse made a sharp gesture with her finger and the demon staff ripped upwards to tear through Kolvuk's chest and neck before gliding down to settle in her hand. Kolvuk stopped thrashing and blinked in surprise as the two halves of his body flopped in opposite directions.

Black blood spurting from his torn body, his engorged and corrupted heart still beat strongly in his ruined chest. Mariesse could end it by piercing that black core but she had no desire to kill him just yet. She swung her staff at his huge head and took it clean off at the shoulders. She grabbed his heart in one fist and yanked it from his body.

She laced the heart on the top of the tomb and then casually retrieved the head and placed it next to it. She rested both arms on the tombs and looked down at Kolvuk's head which still spluttered and blinked at her. She dangled her breasts in his face and whispered in his ear.

'I am returning the invitation my dear Kolvuk. Come stay with me for a hundred years. I have a wonderful spot in my basement among some garlic flowers for you.'

Kolvuk tried to speak but his larynx was gone so only a choked sound came out. The head would not die while the heart still beat even if it wasn't attached to his body. His physical form would disintegrate in the sunlight eventually but an ancient vampire could completely reform in time but it would take a very long time.

It was time Mariesse intended to enjoy with her old foe. She did so enjoy cooking with garlic and she was sure Kolvuk would enjoy sampling her new dishes.

'Do not fret Kolvuk, I have the head of the demon Agarreion at my house. He does so

love talking and you will be perfect companions.'

Mariesse stuffed the heart into Kolvuk's mouth and picked his head up. She summoned another soul portal and walked through, with the vampire head in tow.

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