

Demon's Wrist Chronicles

A Course Gesture

“ It makes no sense that anyone that has lived for 872 years and possessed all of the powers available to a mature Black Dragon would be afraid of the dark.”

Vinnie had made sport of her on many separate occasions with that very point, but Quibrettktho disliked the thought of crossing through the temple beneath the castle. The priests themselves did not truly bother her - although she kept a wary eye upon them. They were aware of the station that she held in the Royal Court. No open plots would ever be considered for long; surely if they were to be carried out it would be far from the confines of the inner sanctum of the cloister of priests.

She wasn't even afraid of the errant undead creatures that wandered to and fro in the deep recesses of the temple's endless corridor system. They were not in the least bit dangerous to her, unless they appeared in great numbers that is. Truly, they rarely if ever even remotely surprised her as she maintained her consciousness ahead of herself a good 6 paces whenever she was forced to traverse the confines of the dark pit.

Most likely the main reason for the fear came from the lesson learned early in life. The one thing the worthless piece of meat she called a father had ever told her - a lesson learned early is rarely forgotten later.

Four days into her 347th year, early one spring evening she was awoken by the trippings of a party of “misadventurers”, as she often referred to them, attempting to sneak into her lair. They must have been fools. She remembered thinking of the fact that none of them even carried a weapon suitable to do her any permanent damage. So it was that she decided to simply sport with them as a cat does with a defenseless mouse that it has no intention of eating, but that it would allow to while away an otherwise boring day. It would have been so but that one of them was a cleric of some, to her, insignificant God.

This religious fellow was one of those radical types that feel every creature that doesn't see the world through the same eyes that he does should meet its doom. This child to the world would have simply been batted about, had his armor dented a bit and then tossed out a bit more respectful and perhaps a bit more feared of the dragon race than when he entered. He ruined the fun with the reading of an ancient parchment that a mountebank of his caliber should never have possessed.

In an instant the gilded cavern exploded in a shower of whirling, slicing metal. From the radiant glow of the oil lamps shone the cold steely flashes of arcane steel that gouged into the plated skin of the black dragon shocking her with disbelief and moving her with incomparable rage. From her treasure laden bed she arose with a speed and agility that was not to be expected of her great mass. The blinded ferocity and indignance of the beast would be measured in her first blow.

"I will not dispatch you quickly, mortals!" she roared, landing full atop the human female clad in simple robes and breeches to the rear of the party. She had cut off their escape and could feel the bones of her first kill pushing through the meat of its body and into the tough leather of her hind feet. She wheeled about causing the abdomen of the foul creature to explode onto its former companions.

"You'll not dispatch any without great pain, dark beast!", announced a large man clad entirely in a grayed metallic suit. He dashed forth with his own agility to land a blow upon the right shoulder of the bloodied Quibrettktho. Although the mighty sword held the appearance of an ominous weapon, in truth it was of no consequence against the armored plate of the great beast. Had she been of a less fierce mind she would have admired the man for his courage and strength in facing his death with such life.

Having caught not only the man in the metal suit, but two other men - one in animal skins the other in chain linked armor in a group; she unleashed the stinging fury of her acidic juices upon them. Animal skins simply melted immediately before her eyes. Chain mail was a bit more interesting as he must have been carrying something that did not react well with acid and exploded into a burst of flames. Metal man became bright and shiny but the red ooze that issued from the seams in the metal told the true tale of his fate. He fell at her feet in a pile that continually became smaller as time passed. Chain mails final explosion was the real show stopper, she thought, as his head was blown free from the tortured body to rest gazing up at her feet.

"I should like to keep you as a memento of this grand diversion" she said most politely to the bodiless head as she moved toward the now retreating priest. Over the melted gold and finery she tread to the spot where the man was preparing to meet his end.

"You'll rue the day you killed us!" he cried in a shaky but defiant tone. "Tyr will punish you, foul creature!" he spat, trembling head to foot as the great weight of the dragon came down upon his fragile body. Crushed and broken in too many places to count the doomed cleric laid at the foot of her bed and uttered curses for the final minutes of his life.

"Your babblings shall not hinder me human" she suggested. "Long after your death I'll taste life" she continued, laughing at his torture.

She was quite wrong. From almost that very moment in time the bold and powerful Quibrettktho lost her sense of taste. Being somewhat of a gourmet did not help the matter any either. It was a little thing and easily overlooked at first, but soon it became frightening that a pitiful and insignificant human such as that one could have that much favor with powers of that magnitude. The laws of good sportsmanship had been violated! It was down right unfair. She was cursed to live with the inability to taste.

The curse had made her rather bitter toward all humans. Small wonder it was that upon their first meeting that she did not kill Vinnie. Perhaps it was his promise to restore her sense of taste that kept her from destroying him and his trespassing troop. Could be it was that he was the first human to ever talk to her and treat her

with respect. He had never tried to attack her, yet she knew he was a formidable power as humans go. He did not test his ego on her but immediately sought her as an ally. And when she became enamored with him and sought him as a lover he did not retreat from her human form as most of his ilk would certainly do. Truly he held her respect, but as for clerics she had only contempt.

All in all the trek through the temple was uncharacteristically quiet. None of the usual following her from a distance. None of the staring or scowling that had become normal for the underling priests. Only one instance of grumbling under the breath of some mid-ranked priest attempting to gouge her with words. Perhaps he was strutting for the underling entourage nearby. He was none the less reminded of to whom he was chastising.

“Foolish humans.” she murmured - just loud enough to be heard. “ They must have not only forgotten my station, but my true form also.”

It was at that moment that a ghoul spilled from an alcove not ten paces ahead. It bolted as fast as its bloodied and decaying feet would carry it - straight for Quibretthko. It was painfully obvious that the grumbling High Priest had called this dead human carcass to do his bidding.

Although kept perpetually dark and dismal, the temple area was very lush with treasure not only in the form of artifacts and trinkets, but also in architecture. The priests were proud of their surroundings and of all the fact that it was paid for by the victims of the church. It was strictly taboo for her to do any damage in the temple. She had been counseled on this before. When Dryllan Adrano, High Priest of Ahlmastro, brought charges of vandalism upon her to the King. Naturally Vinnie rescued her, as she knew that he would, from the plans of the priest. She was compelled to do penance to Vincenzo however. She wondered, as jets of caustic fluid spewed from her already transforming mouth, what new method of mating he would teach her this time.

Body still altering, the surge of acid and bile spewed forth upon not only the worm ridden creature but the walls, floor, and finery of the temple hall. The plates of her hybrid form were beginning to take full shape but the clothing she wore was beginning to smoke and rot under the fury of her powerful breath weapon.

Walking through the acids she considered that the dress was to be a surprise for Vinnie. He had seen the rest of her many times before and she had made a special trip while in Sclerricc to do some ‘shopping’ among the human females. She had even gone to the trouble of inquiring as to the coordination of differing fabrics and colors. Who would ever have guessed that the plots of Count Narcoulli would be unearthed in the shop of a maker of dresses for human females.

Hearing the outraged shouting and wailing to her rear she realized that it was, indeed, a smart move walking through the acid. The wails and sobs of the priests to the rear were bordering crazed. The fanatics were so entranced with attacking her that some of the lessers were running full speed into the acidic death. Presumably the plan was to attack the dragon concubine of the prince, although none of them made it much further than fifteen or twenty yards before their feet were eaten off by the acid. Tripping and falling into the pools of caustic juices left them in no

better shape as they were dissolved in minutes. Agonizing minutes she thought, smiling. The shouts and curses began to die down as she started to ascend the stair well of the Western Tower past the first level and Dryllan's locked lab to the second floor and the fest hall.

The fact that she was completely naked meant nothing to Quibrettko, why should it she never wore clothing in her true form. In fact often she had to force herself to remember to wear clothing when in human or hybrid form. Her exit from the stair well drew not only the crossing of two halberds by the elite castle guard, but brief glances of approval as the bare skin entirely resembled that of a human female - the change from hybrid form complete. She gave the guards no regard as she turned to her right, away from the great Fest Hall and marched through the opulent hall to the huge iron doors before the inner gate's crossing. The cool sweat upon the inner surface of the doors foretold of the fierce cold on the other side. She took refuge in the knowledge that Vinnie's chambers would hold all that would warm her within.

Bracing herself for the blast of cool air that was soon to embrace her, she was startled as the door swung inward rather abruptly. Although the driving wind billowed his dark cloak about him she recognized this chilled form as that of Stephen, Vinnie's closest friend. The fact that he was a priest could almost be overlooked were it not that his father was Dryllan Adrano. Now there was one that she truly feared. Were he to decide to do so Dryllan was one of the few humans alive that could singlehandedly kill nearly any dragon. Stephen's heritage and position kept him from really becoming friends with Quibrettko, therefore they continually bickered in such a fashion as to make others feel nervous about them. They both knew it a ruse.

"Your pimples are getting goose bumps." replied Stephen in his normal disconnected tone. "I submit that you are not putting full attentions upon the process of your own changing. What troubles you?"

"Nothing dares trouble me priest." she snapped at him, still off balance from the surprise of his entry. She began to take hold of her senses as to let this man make her angry would be to give him a victory over her. "It is best to move about without the encumbrance of these oversized lumps of meat attached to my chest", she calmly replied as her breasts began to enlarge to the size they were before the encounter with the ghoul. The appearance of the ghoul had forced her to change to hybrid form to do battle. When she changed back, she realized, she must have had something on her mind.

"For someone that has tasted life for so long you know nothing of the mind of a man." Stephen started as he took the end to the cigarette he was smoking and placed it into the leavings bag he carried at his side. "And I know you Quibrettko, although you are not at all disciplined you would not cross through the castle without your clothing while in human form."

He is always so damned smug, she thought. At first she had come to the conclusion that he was that way because his father was the high priest. That was a mistake; his father was harder on him than he was on any of the other priests. The next conclusion became that he had as his friend the Prince Regent. Not so.

The inescapable truth was that the young priest was simply extremely self confident, and observant.

“Well, perhaps you do not know me as well as you think that you do, Stephen. Perhaps you wish to know me even better.” she concluded, noticing his gaze had shifted to her now enlarged breasts.

Without shifting the tilt of his head he raised his eyes to meet hers, stared through her for a moment and replied, “clerical business requires my attention. Excuse me ‘Queen-Bee’”.

She noticed as he began to glide down the narrow corridor that he was far too graceful to truly be a human. He must be another form of creature - surely a dragon. Only a dragon could ever glide along like that. It was the thought that Stephen behaved more like a dragon than a human that allowed her to consider him, among all other priests, as acceptable company. Companionship seemed so strange. Humans seemed to seek out this ridiculous pursuit with all of their being. It was, after almost three and one half years that she was beginning to understand the need for a constant bonding between two entities. Vincenzo had always treated her with such kindness that at first it became almost unbearable. To start with it was, for a dragon, unheard of to share a dwelling with a mate. The possibility for conflict was just too great, and there is never enough room for everyone’s treasure. Sooner or later one or the other begin to think of their companion as a threat to their wealth. Males were especially bad about hoarding and controlling their treasures from the female. They soon became twisted and unbearable in every possible way. Her memories of her own father were not at all pleasant. Perhaps that was why she never mated.

An odd thought crossed her mind as she passed through the solarium on the other side of the inner gate’s crossing. As she entered the Eastern Tower’s stair well, on the last leg of her journey, she began to wonder at the possibility of successfully mating with a human. Great Azerbaijan! What a thought to enter the head of lineage such as hers. If her mother was to ever read such a thought! She, who maintained the purity of heritage, endured the humiliation and disgust of Guiliquaenk Traxious to be assured that her lineage had the “Birthright of Purity”. As disgusting and cruel as her father was, and still is, it would never be acceptable to her mother if the truth of her relation with the prince were known. To make matters even worse would be to birth a Drac through the joining with a human, even if it were possible.

The mating ritual would indeed be complex to any human that encountered it. Of course human mating practices were indeed distressing, perhaps that is why they practice their joinings so often. Her first time to engage in the ritual was rather embarrassing at least. Although they had only been together for a few weeks she felt drawn to Vinnie in a strange fashion. The Cloak of the Manta Ray is to blame she had told herself. He gains dominion over all that fly with this garment. Only while he remains aloft though, she had considered. And although she knew him to be a tyrant she found that he possessed a soft spot. Never did he force her into any immediate danger. Nor did he place her open to difficult odds; when injured she was healed by his personal cleric.

Becoming curious of his private life she began to spy on the young prince disguised as one of the many birds that congregated on the lightning arrestors outside of his rooms. It was during the eighth hour one spring evening that she saw it for the first time. A brisk rap at the door of his room preceded the entry of two gold clad, red robed, palace guards with a peasant girl in tow. To look upon the guards it was impossible to discern if there truly was a creature inside the golden plate armor, they made no sounds and left as quickly as they entered. The peasant girl acted oddly at first, as if she were a field mouse searching about the walls of a cage hoping to evade the jaws of the cobra bearing down upon her. He eyed her rather carefully, it seemed as though all he wished to do was stare at the wench. With a wave of his left hand it became obvious that other things were in mind as all of the young girls clothing disappeared. All but a rather strange metallic under garment that rode about the girls waist. It seemed the most useless form of armor ever contrived. Why although this suit appeared quite strong it barely covered the poor girls waist. It could be only blind luck that any attack would ever be launched that was directed to this part of the body. It was at that moment that he reached into his tunic of black leather armor to remove a golden key on a silver chain. It was only her superior eyesight that allowed her to notice the ivory carving of the dragons skull attached to the end of the key. This would require discussion later she thought. She began to get aggravated at the thought that this might actually be a Dragon's Key when the true use was revealed. The young human female had moved over near where he reclined on his bed and he had inserted the key into a hole in the tiny suit of armor. With a quick turn of the wrist and a muffled clank the small suit separated at the middle and fell to the floor.

She became aware that human females must be extremely vulnerable at the midsection for the girl immediately placed her hands in front of herself at the very location the armor had once been. It was clearly a defensive move. Quibrettktho became extremely excited as she believed that the prince was preparing to kill and later eat the female. If this was the case she would conveniently show up just in time for dinner. Oddly enough he too removed his clothing with a wave of his arm. The girl doubled over slightly in what must have been an effort to make herself a smaller target. Quibrettktho had to admit it was smart on Vinnie's part to remove his clothing before killing the creature as its blood would certainly splatter everywhere. Oddly enough the dialogue did not fit what must certainly be about to take place.

"What is your name, my dear?"

"It is Annete, my lord." the girl responded quietly as she looked about the room in an obvious attempt to avert his gaze.

"You realize that if you are to marry that you must give yourself to me," he said hesitating only a moment."do you not?"

"Yes lord." she responded her eyes only now meeting his own. "I am truly honored among women that you would choose to give me your attentions." she continued as she began to stand erect and remove her hands as a barrier. "I am shy lord, but I mean for you to enjoy my virtues!" she exclaimed as she leapt into the fur lined bed.

As the cover furs were drawn up it was impossible to determine what exactly had transpired. From time to time a foot or leg would protrude from beneath the warmth of the furs. The muffled sounds that emanated from the chamber were somewhat like those of pain yet they held a strangely compelling tone to them. It was at that moment that she realized what was taking place. Quibretthko felt a flush like never before as if some cruel joke had been played upon her and all the world stood by laughing. The humans were engaged in the act of mating!

True she was his and she was a dragon but, it was also true that he must also respect her feelings and not embarrass her. Her plans for a lesson to her master took only seconds to coalesce in her mind but far longer to put into action. It was nearly three full weeks until another such maiden was brought to the Demon's Wrest. When she arrived at the bathing room Quibretthko acted quickly devouring the helpless creature and taking her form. Recalling the incident she found no reason to expound on the killing of the poor girl as the fight that she put up was completely uneventful, she likened it to dinner at a feeding trough. After taking the clothing that was present and reconnecting the tiny armor suit about her own waist she rapped on the door to allow the guards to take her to the Prince Regent.

Of course, she too put on the coy act that the previous girl used. Why not it seemed to work the last time? The entire thing gave her a powerful rush throughout her system as she began to consider that she was possibly the first of her kind to engage in this human ritual. It was all fun and exciting to be the first dragon to ever engage in human bonding. Then it happened. Under the cover of fine furs he rolled her over! Over upon her back! She had never allowed herself to be placed in this position! Every dragon knows that the weight of the wings on their connecting bones will suffocate an opponent. No dragon ever went on their back! From birth it is taught -Never roll onto your back as it is certain death at any age! A million thoughts raced through her head as she began gasping for air as if there really were wings pressing against her back. Making matters worse he mounted her in what could only be an offensive move. He must be reading my thoughts and knowing that it is me and has decided to kill me for the murder of that young girl, she thought! In a purely reactionary move she flexed her knees throwing him and the covers out into the room some fifteen feet.

But that was then before I understood what was to transpire, she thought, straightening her deep black hair. She opened the door to Vinni's chambers as the pair of gold-clad guards to either side of the door raised their halberds to allow her to pass. Including many of the dragons that dwelt throughout the lands there were none that held their chambers to such a level of opulence. Looking about the room she could not hold her gaze upon any one item as though to look too long would not allow her to enjoy the other exquisite items adorning every wall and alcove. Indeed to many the room was far too cluttered but, in the clutter was an intensely elaborate pattern of thought and organization. She knew that were she to move any item even slightly that her master would know within moments that his retreat had been defiled. As she was considering which of the items in the room it would be hardest to notice had been toyed with the door swung open and Vincenzo entered the room. Rebounding off of a rubbery bulb attached to the floor the door returned upon its arc as the Prince moved smoothly out of its way. His cloak, he

was only now removing in a flourish, sprayed the chamber with a puff of snow. Quibrettktho shuddered remembering the intense cold of the return flight from Sclerricc, the thought of these chambers the one thing that drove her on.

“You are beautiful, Quibrettktho.” He said as he removed his swords from his back. “In all of your guises. I find the deep darkness of your shining scales especially,” he hesitated a moment as though searching for the words that they both knew he had already chosen carefully, “alluring.”

“My beauty serves you, master.” she cooed toying with him as would a serf woman. She knew that he never began a discussion with her without first complementing her in some way. She also knew that when he was this reserved that his mind had been in the conflict. In the locks of an Am-Flen conflict even she avoided his attentions. “But enough of this game playing Vincenzo, my trip was indeed worth the effort for although I ruined my dress I discovered a plot that may be building against House Scarlotti and the Regency of Sclerricc.”

Resting the finely crafted breastplate on the ruenerist rack especially made for it he was now free of the burden of the armor. The last touch of the cold maenaestic breast-plate was the last reminder of the intense biting cold that he had been buffeted with on the ledge of the great tower. Turning his body and his full attentions to Quibrettktho he raised his head and urged her on. “You always bring me the most joyous of tales Quee - Bee; please elaborate.”

“It’s your friend Narcoulli, Vinnie, he is up to some kind of trickery again.” she said, leaning back into the myriad of tingling furs and pillows. As she tossed her last garments to the side of the bed chamber she added, “I believe he is replacing the upper positions in the army with his own lackeys.”

“I wish you would use the clothing racks that I had made for you instead of simply tossing your crap everywhere.” Vinnie was always put off by her randomness and care-free attitude. “Now, can you prove this accusation?”

“Well I might be inclined to do so if properly persuaded.” she cooed writhing and undulating her nude frame about the bedding.

“I believe that you have been spending entirely too much time studying and engaging in human mating rituals.” It really bugged him and she knew it. Why she always had to put on one of these wild shows was beyond him. She should have been a human female - how is it that a creature that doesn’t even engage in sex be so fixated on it? “Tell me now then we’ll discuss your persuasion.”