

The Harmless Flame

Chapter 1

It was a quiet evening at the tainted part of Quel'thalas that was now known as Ghostlands. As the dusk was settling, a silhouette of a female elf could be seen against the red sun that was slowly disappearing behind the horizon. Upon closer inspection, one could see that this was not one of the blood elves that inhabited the area. She was a Kal'dorei, slightly shorter than most of her kind.

Her long, silky blue hair moved from side to side as she followed a small road across the darkened lands in a determined, yet somewhat cautious manner, her eyes scanning the surrounding thickets. Carrying a beautifully carved wooden bow with a quiver full of razor-sharp arrows on her back, it was obvious that the elf was a huntress, yet no animal companion could be seen near her. Even though her skin was soft and free of scars, the look in her eyes implied that she had taken part in many battles and that her scars were not on her skin, but on her soul instead.

Silana sighed quietly. She had been traveling for the entire day, and there was still a long way ahead of her. If only she had her saber.. No, it would draw too much attention, she knew. She had been sent as a reinforcement to the Kal'dorei spy post at the northwestern part of the Ghostlands - it was imperative that the camp would not be discovered by their enemies. She wouldn't be the one leading them there.

Another sigh escaped her lips as she sensed that the pair of green eyes that had been following her for a while now had gotten closer to her. The huntress had chosen to pretend not to have noticed this, trying to give her stalker a false hope of a surprise attack. She would be the one to surprise this fel-infused follower of hers, she thought, a small grin forming onto her lips.

The twilight had already fallen when she started to set up a camp. The lack of light didn't bother her as she could see perfectly well even in complete darkness, but she wanted to deal with her follower while still having strenght left. Having a long day of traveling behind her, she was feeling a bit tired already. It was best to confront the enemy now, she thought.

The glowing green eyes remained in the distance, observing her movements from the shadowy thickets. Kneeling on the ground to light up a pile of drywood for her campfire, the huntress offered her stalker a good opportunity for an attack, her back turned against the pair of eyes. A part of her wished her feline companion to be there, but she had left the cat at the safety of Astranaar, not wanting to risk him getting injured in the possible encounters. After all, fighting blood elves was nothing like hunting the beasts of the wild.

Suddenly, a loud snap could be heard. Silana grinned as she heard the familiar noise, but her expression became serious almost immediately. There had not been a scream of pain, and the sound the sharp teeth of the trap make when entering into the flesh of the victim was different than usual. Instead, another noise could be heard – a menacing crackling that broke the silence of the night.

The huntress turned around just in time to see a ball of fire hurling towards her, illuminating the surrounding woods and leaving behind a trail of sparks. Leaping onto the ground to dodge it, she responded with her bow that she had loaded and tensioned with lightning speed, sending an arrow flying towards the source of the fiery magic.

At that moment, she got the first glimpse of her enemy - it was a female Sin'dorei, clothed in a beautiful blue and white silken robe that was decorated with symbols commonly used by those who follow the path of arcane. Grinning arrogantly, the blood elf simply watched as the arrow came straight towards her, one leg in the trap Silana had placed.

The huntress' expression didn't change when her arrow was deflected by her attacker with just a small and elegant hand gesture. She knew that there was magic that could be used to form a protective barrier around the caster. The Sin'dorei she was facing was a powerful magic-user no doubt, yet she wasn't bothered by it. Those magical shields would not last forever.

As she observed the sorceress, she noticed what was wrong with her trap – there was a layer of ice surrounding its teeth, preventing it from snapping together. Still grinning, the elf simply stepped out of the trap, her eyes fixed on the night elf that now showed some signs of amusement.

Silana grinned back at the red-haired Sin'dorei, seemingly pleased that the encounter had turned out to be more interesting than she had expected. The excitement of the battle with the Horde had been long gone, as a single arrow was often sufficient to put an end to her enemy. As she eyed the woman up and down, she noticed that her foe was not only deadly, but beautiful as well.

Her moment of admiration was suddenly interrupted by a series of fireballs launched towards her by her attractive enemy. Dashing across the ground, she easily dodged the searing flames, but her own attacks were not effective either – although most of her arrows hit their target, all of them were sent away by the magical barrier that seemed to be stronger than she had expected.

The fighting went on for a long time, neither of the combatants showing any sign of weakness or retreat. Arrows and fireballs were flying across the night sky as the two different elves seemed to be going all-out, fighting for their lives with everything they got. The ground was filled with black, smoldering spots from countless fireballs that had missed their targets, and elven arrows could be seen in every direction one could look into.

Silana was getting exhausted, although she tried her best not to show it. She knew the battle had to be ended soon, or it might be her last. Launching a volley of arrows towards the sorceress, she used the moment to run into the shadows, leaving her enemy standing at the edge of the road they were fighting on, looking after her into the darkness. Had she seen the face of the blood elf, she might have gotten slightly worried, as the grin on her face was only getting wider.

The huntress watched her enemy from the thickets. Now it was her time to stalk. Slowly, she raised her bow, placing a magical arrow – one that she had reserved for a special occasion - to rest against her finger and tensioning the bow without making a slightest of sound. Aiming her bow at the Sin'dorei that appeared to be clueless of her whereabouts, she was ready to end the battle with one perfectly aimed shot.

Whoosh - that's all she heard before the blood elf had disappeared from her sight.

The next thing she knew was that she was lying on her back on the ground, the green eyes watching her from above with a sparkle of the joy of victory. A fearful gasp escaped her lips as she realized that something warm and soft was pressing against her neck.

The huntress froze instantly, letting the bow fall from her grip. Her heart beat faster than it had during the battle. Even though the Sin'dorei was merely resting her hand on her neck, she knew that the sorceress could end her life without an effort in the blink of an eye. She had lost. She was about to die.

Closing her eyes, she prepared herself for the killing blow. She was not afraid of death, she hadn't been for a long time. There was nothing left for her except the war. She was so tired of it already.

The huntress smiled. It had been a good battle. Now she could finally rest.