

Following a traumatic experience while growing up, a nomadic hyena struggles with her feelings against males when a nomadic male hyena becomes interested in her and later invites her to his new clan. She agrees with it in hopes of getting revenge on the renegades who attacked her, but once her plot is carried out, will her feelings change?

Hyena Revenge

Nightmares - that's what Deyanira has to deal with on a constant basis. Ever since she was little, her life spiraled out of control ever since that devastating day where her entire tribe was wiped out by an enemy clan and she was almost a casualty. The female hyena changed dramatically - no longer does she smile and laugh, only brooding and plotting are her doing now.

Stepping out of her cave, Deyanira clutches a spear in her arms, ready to head out on a morning hunt. She forgot one natural thing though - sunlight. The female hyena uses her arm to shield her eyes from the blinding sun, uttering a light groan in complaint, "Urgh! Stinking sunlight is so bright!"

The shielding only lasts until Deyanira manages to adjust her eyes to the blistering sunlight. Her day has just started and she is already looking for something to add to her stash. Not feeling hungry at the moment, the nomadic female is only beginning her search for something to add to her surplus when she begins scouring the landscape, searching for something edible.

Following a brief stretch of her limbs, Deyanira sets her spear aside for a moment, attempting to find some food sources in her line of vision, but after a brief consideration, the female nomad picks up her spear again. There is something that she still has to keep on the lookout for, and it is very serious.

With the enemy tribe still alive and active, Deyanira has to constantly stay on her guard at all times, even if it means being armed and sleeping with a knife or dagger under her pillow. But the most devastating experiences she has stems from her nightmares she has every time when she's asleep.

At the current moment, Deyanira is out on a scavenging run in search of food, having seen nothing out of the ordinary just yet. For now, she's in the clear, so she begins to come out of her den, exploring around for anything edible to scavenge and eat.

With the burning hot sun beating down on the African grassland, Deyanira can already feel the burning effects from the sun. She groans, "I should have gotten more water... ugh! I hate the sun!"

While the female hyena continues her search, she comes across a bush where she begins to gaze around at her surroundings, attempting to gauge where to go next. While contemplating her next move, Deyanira raises her nose to the air in hopes of picking up a familiar scent. But upon sniffing the air, she rushes to retrieve her spear and come back, hiding against the bush not only to protect herself, but also to remain unseen.

The nomadic hyena peers from the bush, observing a silver fox up ahead just wandering around and relaxing. Yet Deyanira recognizes this fox as one of the enemy assassins that wiped out her clan. The female hyena doesn't strike just yet; she waits for her target to be active before moving in for the takedown. So Deyanira remains inactive for the time being until the fox moves.

The blistering sunlight remains high and heavy in the atmosphere during the progressive morning, and Deyanira is slowly frustrated by the minute. Not only is her stomach rumbling, giving away her hunger and her position, but this enemy fox is still crouched in her territory, not even making a peep.

"How long is this going to go on? I can't stand guys like that in my territory!" Deyanira complains while snarling in frustration, "And I need supplies too!? Augh, this really burns me up! I guess I'll have to wait until he wakes up."

Deyanira considered having to wait for a long period of time for the fox to wake up, but she didn't have to wait long. The vulpine, having sensed movement nearby, cautiously makes his way over to investigate; not only was it just movement he sensed, but also the noises coming from Deyanira herself during her hiding period inside of the bush - mainly, the rustling leaves.

It doesn't take long for the fox to notice a pair of glistening golden eyes and a black - smoke furred figure observing him but when the fox recognizes the hiding hyena, he turns tail and runs to alert his tribe. And Deyanira gives chase.

The female hyena runs after the silver fox only for a short distance when she slows down to take a moment and launch her spear directly at the fleeing fox, followed by the sound of a furry body hitting the grassland floor.

Having landed a successful impaling attack on her target, Deyanira jogs towards the bloody scene and retrieves her spear, making her way back to her original spot. With a freshly killed enemy fox and a bloody spear, Deyanira's resolve for water increases even more. So after coming back to her original spot, Deyanira searches for a watering hole in the distance, using her free hand to shield her eyes from the blistering sunlight.

While making her visual search, her audio search picks up the noises of several squeaks in the area - must be African Wild Dogs. But they were nowhere in her line of sight; they must be somewhere else. But from the location of their squeaking, they have to be farther away from her location.

After burying the dead fox, Deyanira wanders around to search for a watering hole or riverbed to hopefully make some progress in washing up and finding food, but so far there seemed to be none. That is, until she pauses upon picking up on the sound of rushing water closeby.

From hearing this noise, Deyanira starts to follow the source of the noise, taking her across the grassy area and a few trees around the landscape. What the female hyena stumbles upon next makes her eyes inflate and sparkle. There, flowing before her eyes is a trickling river! She has finally found rushing water at last! Overcome with awe, the female hyena drops down to her knees, tossing her bloody spear aside before sticking her hands into the running water to wash the blood off.

Feeling the cool water against her fur, Deyanira immerses herself into washing and cleaning herself up to get the blood off. She then washes her spear to remove the mess from it and begins to make her way back to her cave to grab something she can use to store the water in.

A few minutes later, Deyanira comes back with a water pitcher to scoop some of it up when she hears a sudden calling noise in the distance, causing her to jump.

"!? What the heck was that??" While the nomadic hyena searches for the source of the noise, she immediately retrieves her spear and water jug, ready for both fight and flight. But upon noticing something above her in her peripheral vision, Deyanira raises her head up only to see a bird flying by making the exact same calling noise. Incensed by this, Deyanira throws her spear down and huffs, "All that over nothing! Hmph! Now, where was I?"

After her little complaining tirade, Deyanira goes back to her own business in retrieving some water not only to drink but also to use later on so she can eat. This is the only thing she is focused on at the moment. But her little period of solitude doesn't last long this time.

A brief rustling noise alerts the female hyena to movement nearby, causing her to snap her eyes behind her to find the source. Loudly, she complains, "Oh come on! Can't a girl get some rest already!? If you're just gonna kill me, come out and do it already!"

The culprit behind the rustling turns out to be a reptilian this time, and it leaps out to lunge at Deyanira, having been completely exposed in his stealthy plot to remain undetected. Deyanira herself was expecting it, but she was not prepared for an ambush from behind.

Gasping in horror, the female hyena only sees a shadow over her in a brief second before toppling over from being tackled, falling headfirst into the water. This is now a life-or-death situation now.

Deyanira fights against the current to swim back to shore. But once she resurfaces and climbs to shore, the hyena now sees what she's dealing with now: a large, yet slender black crocodile. And he is now sauntering towards her holding her own spear in his hand. With an eerie, dark laugh, the crocodile proclaims, "And now to finish what we all began!"

The moment the black crocodile raises the spear to impale his target, Deyanira loses all color. She's going to be put to death right here on the spot! But upon receiving a sudden flashback, things change in a matter of seconds when the female hyena suddenly rolls out of the way, evading the impaling attack. There is a sudden, burning rage of fire in her eyes where she begins to embrace her fight mode.

Upon noticing the change in the hyena's demeanor, the crocodile hisses, "Hmph! You're not gonna last for long, little twerp!" When the crocodile raises the spear again, Deyanira's instincts kick in and she lunges at the crocodile, knocking to the ground where she begins repeatedly slugging him in the face. But thanks to his tough hide, the reptilian sustains less damage than a normal mammal. He also throws the hyena off of him, which turns out to be his biggest mistake; he doesn't realize this until it is too late for him.

The crocodile rises up, having sustained a few minor bruises to the face. Glaring daggers at Deyanira, he begins to shuffle forward while declaring, "Grrr, it's not over yet! I'm not through with y-!"

The furious expression that the black crocodile is wearing transforms into one of complete shock and pain upon receiving the same spear that he picked up to use in his attempt to impale Deyanira, only this time he is on the receiving end of the impalement, having his chest pierced through completely when Deyanira threw her spear as a last resort. Giving a final hiss, the evil crocodile drops to the floor, dead.

The tense silence lasts with Deyanira breathlessly staring her dead target down until she catches her breath. Then when the dust settles, Deyanira wipes her face

in a sneer, before flowering at the dead croc and vehemently hissing, "I will not stop until each and every last one of you are dead...! DEAD!!! You hear me!?"

The nomadic hyena goes on to retrieve her spear, which takes quite a bit more effort since she impaled the crocodile through the chest, and after successfully collecting her spear back, it is almost an exact reminder of earlier, except that last time she wasn't faced with a death sentence. Still, Deyanira has to clean herself up again, which she doesn't mind since she now has a source of water to head to. So the lone hyena makes the short trek back to her original spot to clean her weapon but she also notices her water jar on the ground - it must have been picked up by the crocodile during his initial murder attempt. Seeing her jar lying on the ground, Deyanira snorts, "So the idiot tried to take my stuff while in the process of trying to kill me - or after. Whatever. Glad that failed."

After picking up her water jar and filling it with water, the nomadic female goes about cleaning her spear when a series of whooping squeaks and squeals catch her attention, making her furious. "Oh come on!! What is it now!??"

She receives her answer later upon noticing an arrow flying into a tree with a deep *THUNK!*, embedding itself completely into the tree. Immediately, the female hyena bolts back to her camp to retrieve extra supplies. Along the way, she gripes, "Ugh! I can't have any peace around here! It's all chaos!!!"

Every second counted with Deyanira's retreat and return where she armed herself with a series of bows. But by the time she returns, she observes a male hyena picking over a dead rabbit to loot the body. Watching this unfold, Deyanira calls out, "HEY!!! Identify yourself!!!"

What Deyanira sees next greatly impresses her; the male hyena that was picking over the dead body is an indigenous African like Deyanira herself, but unlike her, the male is a muscular beast. But when he turns directly to face her, Deyanira can see his eyes - they are a stunning golden color! But before the female hyena can even fantasize over him, she shakes her head to snap hers out of an incoming daydream.

Regaining her senses back, Deyanira tries again to find out where this male hyena is coming from and what his intentions are - attempt #2. She demands, "I'm gonna try again - identify yourself and tell me what you are doing here!"

The male hyena introduces himself, "My name is Kirby MacIntyre; I am a warrior of the Windsor tribe to the east! We just got done finishing up a series of takedowns on some bandits invading our land."

Deyanira blinks at the male hyena in question, taking interest in what Kirby has to say. She grows intrigued and saunters her way up to the male hyena, brushing a finger along his chest. The female hyena plays her charm card, appearing to be attracted to the male hyena but Kirby steps back, raising his hands up in protest, "Whoa whoa hey! What are you doing??"

"Awww, are you not attractive? Is my charm not enough? What is it?" Feigning mock disappointment, Deyanira demands to know why Kirby isn't interested when the male hyena bluntly reveals, "I'm not looking for romance and I am not interested in looking for a mate. Never have been interested in dating."

Dropping her facade, the female hyena smirks, "I see now. So what are you then? Not interested or are you playing hard to get? Surely there must be something about you, now!"

Frustrated, Kirby barks, "Look, I'm more interested in bagging the perps invading our land rather than hooking up for some dusty, dingy romance flick! Now are you gonna help us out or not??"

Taken aback by the male hyena's sudden change in demeanor, Deyanira folds her arms, huffing, "Fine then, I'll help you guys out. Now tell me what's going on!"

"We just had an invasion - that's what's going on!" Deyanira follows Kirby while he explains the situation, sprinting back to his own territory, "The Blackridge tribe recently invaded our land and tried to make off with some of our relics! Not only that, but they tried to kill off some of our own too! Hildebrant and Alieda are on high alert too, since these jerks have sided with an assassin's league!"

Listening to Kirby's explanation, Deyanira's blood begins to run cold to the freezing point. Hating to be on the receiving end of bad news, Deyanira wishes she was never here. Hesitating to ask, the female hyena keeps silent, fearing the absolute worst. Kirby, however, picks up on her condition.

"Look, I know this is hard for you to hear - hard for all of us really, but the instigators responsible are dead now - only two of them are still alive, though badly wounded." Kirby explained. He then points out what Deyanira froze on, "As for whom these punks have sided with, they're known as the Blackrock Guild - an entirely different tribe made up of assassin's of various species. They'll stop at nothing to accomplish their goal!"

Deyanira's blood turns to ice upon hearing the name of the tribe that completely destroyed her people, her village, and nearly destroyed her. Then as fast as she

shivers, she becomes enraged, "Those goons are still alive?? They should all be dead!!!"

"You know these guys??" Kirby and Deyanira reach the territory from rushing past some bushes scattered about, to which the two hyenas finally arrive at the territory. When they survey the scene, Deyanira mentions, "Those Blackridge creeps are the main crew responsible for wiping out my land and my people - they almost wiped me out but I survived."

Aghast and horrified, Kirby swallows, "You're the last remaining member of your tribe!? How did you survive that genocide??"

The female hyena snorts, "Even I don't know; I am fortunate that I survived so I can take revenge on these fools. Anyways, what's the situation with these guys?"

Kirby reports upon surveying the scene, "They're seeking to pillage every community and take over the world. They just recently invaded our land and tried to make off with some loot, only we came prepared and were able to fight back. We managed to fend them off this time."

Watching the male hyena peek around the landscape, Deyanira poses, "What if we work together to purge the land of these bad apples? They're nothing but psychos."

"Fine with me but you'll have to speak to the chieftain to become part of the Loren tribe." Kirby affirmed. Then the male hyena adds, "You should have no trouble with our chieftain. Hildebrandt is easy to get along with. Trust me, once you bring him up to speed, he's more than happy to work with you."

"When we're free, I want to meet him. See if he's any good with tracking and fighting." Deyanira muses to herself. Then she mentions, "I also wouldn't mind getting to know you more personally, Kirby. You seem like an interesting guy."

A rosy tint colors Kirby's cheeks. Accepting the compliment, Kirby bashfully admits, "I'm not that interesting of a guy. You just met me. Besides, we have more important issues to worry about."

Taking this news to heart, Deyanira muses, "I suppose we can get to know each other more when we're done erasing this threat. Right now, we need to focus on taking out the trash, wherever that may be."

"We need to get to camp and arm ourselves. And hopefully we can find Hildebrandt in the process. Hopefully he can get you integrated so we can level this threat to the ground!" Kirby rationalized, much to her curiosity.

Deyanira, familiar with tribal custom, wonders, "Say Kirby, how do you guys integrate a new member? I'm familiar with the whole assessment process, but what do you mean by integration?"

Kirby squeaks in thought while mentioning, "Like skill assessment, how good you are in certain areas and what types of skills you have that you excel in, that sort of thing."

"I see." Deyanira noticed out of interest. With each passing moment she becomes more and more enamored with Kirby. Kirby, however, is not interested romantically in return but give him some time and he will eventually warm up to her. At the moment, they have more pressing matters to attend to.

Whooping noises in the air suddenly alert the duo to an impending situation. Together, they scramble to meet the threat and are met with a new sight - two of Kirby's own against two more black-clad Blackridge members. And these guys are wielding battle axes for weapons.

Seeing the danger they're in, Kirby takes the first chance in joining the battle. Even though he is technically unarmed, Kirby braces himself and makes a running charge at one of the assailants, a crocodile. In the midst of the battle, Kirby tackles the brute and begins sinking his jaws into the reptile's neck.

"What the!! Kirby, no!!!" Witnessing the spotted hyena warrior leap into the fray is a fellow striped hyena warrior, desperately fending off the attacks of the second invader using his own sword. But after getting his weapon knocked away by the opponent's battle ax, the second assailant prepares to slice the striped hyena vertically in half.

Angry squeaking and squealing noises come from the spotted hyena fighters who begin to gang up on and overwhelm the first invader. The striped hyena warrior facing the second rival quickly dives aside to avoid being split in half. Then he tackles the intruder from the side, sinking his own jaws into the thug's throat.

Even Deyanira joins in the fray, joining the ripping party. With the invaders overwhelmed, the hyenas make short work of them, using their powerful jaws to destroy bones. And within a matter of minutes, both Blackridge invaders are dead with their heads literally ripped off.

Panting and out of breath, Kirby turns to the group of hyena warriors and begins to address them, their bloodstained maws making them appear as savage killers. "My fellow warriors, this is only just the beginning, for this isn't over yet - we have only

just begun. You have all done well! To the end, we will all fight to the end to rid the world of this threat plaguing our homes, our families, our world!”

“Yeah!!!” With their fists pumping into the air in a celebratory moment, whooping squeaks and cheers are the aftermath of a battle fought well. The hyenas, including Deyanira, later bathe themselves in a nearby river to wash the blood off their fur and gather their supplies to bring back to their village. With dusk and night approaching, they have to be on their guard at all times. But even other tribes aren't safe from the Blackridge threat.

A cacophony of roaring noises occur in the distance, roaring noises erupt in the distance followed by mixed battle cries and roars. While this catches the attention of the hyena tribe, Deyanira and Kirby are out on guard duty, staring out at the horizon when another spotted hyena joins them, clutching a dagger in one hand and a bow in the other.

Upon seeing this guy, Kirby addresses him out of recognition, “Mabec, you come to join us, cousin?”

The orange-eyed spotted hyena remarks, “I'm more than willing to help out if it involves a major threat, and this Blackridge threat is serious news. Normally, I'm against siding with tribes that are our enemies but for this, I'll make an exception.”

“We haven't had any problems from lion tribes as far as I can remember. But they need our help more than we do.” Kirby reminds Mabec of the history between the two, citing no past grievances or hostilities. Mabec nods in understanding while keeping a lookout for any sign of danger. Then it happens...

Racing through the territory is a white lion who ends up tripping from not paying attention - his head was turned watching his intruder, a black / tan lion, behind him. But before the white lion can get back up, he is tackled by the assailant and the two begin fighting on the ground, wrestling against each other. The roaring between them continues where the hyena warriors scatter to give them some space, although one of them jumps into the fray to assist going straight for the black lion.

“Bunny! No!!” It is the same striped hyena who witnessed Kirby doing the same thing earlier. Only this time, Bunny gets bashed aside, this knocking the wind out of him. What happens next catches everyone off-guard...

Out of nowhere, an arrow pierces the black lion through his chest, killing him instantly. All eyes turn to the source of the surprise attack, revealed to be none

other than Deyanira. The female hyena only meets their eyes with annoyance, "What??"

When multiple hyenas begin approaching her for an explanation, the female hyena herself bluntly explains, "I saw an opening in that split second and just went for it. Not that hard to understand."

She rolls her eyes during her retort but the white lion stands up to meet her, "Your quick thinking saved us all. And I think we're all grateful when I speak for myself and my tribe. I think we all can use some rest for now."

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The following morning, when everyone is awake, including the white lion from their encounter, the hyenas are more curious about this buff lion instead of scared. They are sitting around a lit fire while listening to the lion speak. One of them, however, asks the lion a point-blank question. "What were you doing running into our territory?"

The white lion rubs his neck, intertwining his fingers along his large mane. He goes on to explain himself, "To put a long story short, I was being chased by that black lion that you all helped to take down." The white lion then goes on to remark, "There were actually three intruding lions in total and they were wearing all black. We managed to take two of them down quickly but the third one made a beeline for me - I don't know how he knew I was the leader though..."

"Who are you, even?" Here, Deyanira rolls her eyes at listening to the lion ramble on about what happened in the middle of the night. And with this interjection, she gets up to confront him, demanding his identity. "If you're really a chieftain, tell us who you really are! Otherwise, why are we all sitting around together instead of just tearing each other apart??"

Kirby and Bunny both grab Deyanira in an attempt to lead her away and settle her down, only for the white lion to raise his hand to stop them. He calmly reasons with them and introduces himself in the process. "I've dealt with this kind of treatment before, so I am used to it. My name is Juan Tivola, and I am the chieftain of the River tribe. Our village is only a couple of miles away from yours."

Satisfied with the introduction, Deyanira briefly inspects him, taking detailed note of his appearance and frame. With a smirk, she attached herself to Kirby while remarking to Juan, "I see. And you're pretty buff, like Kirby here!"

“Eek! Th-this is not the time for that right now!” Kirby squeaks in protest. The spotted hyena warrior is frozen in surprise while Deyanira is hugging him, caressing and sliding her hands along his chest and his abs. But while Deyanira is putting on a display of affection, Kirby has other ideas.

“Uh Deyanira, maybe some other time please? We have more pressing matters to attend to.” Kirby reminds her. He is not too fond of the female hyena clinging to him at this moment as he is not ready nor interested yet.

Deyanira turns pouty, but before she could air out her act, Kirby whirls and speaks up, “No Deyanira, save it! How can you be interested in a romantic relationship at a time like this when everyone is in danger?? We fight the bad guys off and then you can hook up all you want. But until then, everything must be kept mutual, even between us.”

Deyanira huffs and shrugs, “Fine. But no promises, Kirby. You know you're playing hard to get without realizing it.”

Kirby merely rolls his eyes while dismissing her retort. “Whatever. We have bigger things to worry about than some sort of fling going on in a time of crisis. We need to coordinate, plan our attacks, and strike as hard as we all can. Our jaws aren't enough to take these brutes down...”

“We should enlist some help from the other tribes.” Mabec spoke up in encouragement, trying to rouse the crowd. “Get them to help us and we all unite to take down the Blackridge threat.”

The hyenas' statements and concerns draw Juan's attention with the white lion pointing to himself in gesture. “Well, you got me and my wife. The River tribe is happy to assist in eliminating these Blackridge rivals.” The white lion stands up, beginning to stroke his chin in thought, “These guys are pretty strange, though.”

“Strange isn't how you describe these guys.” It is Deyanira's turn to rise where she approaches the white lion, matching his serious stare with her own. Then without warning she develops a charming smile and advances on the white lion, making him back away and question her, “Uh, what are you doing?”

“Oh, nothing. You're just really handsome, like everyone else around here.” Deyanira attempts to charm her way to Juan just like how she did Kirby. However, Juan raises a hand to silence her and stop her, turning serious once more. And this time, the white lion wrinkles his nose in a snarl at the hyena. Angering one of the most dangerous predators is one of the most extreme things not to do. Now the white lion looks ready to chop Deyanira's head off with his own claws.

Despite being furious, Juan clenches his fists in anger. If his claws were out, his palms would be bloody. Plainly, and through grit teeth and rage, the white lion reveals, "I am a married man and I take pride in my marriage to my wife. If you think you're going to charm your way into my heart, you're dead wrong. If you even try that with me again, it's not just me you'll be confronting, but also my wife."

Scowling at first, Deyanira turns smug. But she is suddenly snatched and sat down by Bunny, who simply shakes his head at her in disapproval. The striped hyena warrior admits, "Honestly, this guy is right. He doesn't enjoy being played with if he's married and he will murder you if you try again. Better hope his wife doesn't reach you or she'll tear you apart herself."

The striped hyena cackles softly, only for Deyanira to snatch herself away from him and slap him across the face. Everyone is silent in anxious anticipation of a fight breaking out between the two. But while Bunny is left rubbing his cheek, Deyanira hisses, "You and lion boy can do us all a favor and shut it. I know how to conduct myself! I don't need anyone telling me what to do!"

While Bunny is left rubbing his cheek, the striped hyena flushes in the face at first. Then he begins chuckling darkly. "And you think what you're doing is justifiable? I'm no saint but what you've been doing is questionable."

"And what are you gonna do about it?" Deyanira challenged, folding her arms.

"Exile or certain death." Bunny blankly replied, giving the female hyena a blank expression. "And I'm aware of the rumors that were spread during my absence here. I've been faithful ever since my journey and return, so you can shut up. We have better things to worry about than some lover's quarrel."

"Whatever -" Deyanira rolls her eyes again, scoffing plainly at Bunny's rebuttal when she insinuates, "- at least you're not the one having to deal with the slaughter of your whole tribe when you were little."

"Genocide is no laughing matter nor is it an easy thing to brush off." Juan proceeds to remind the hyenas of the important issue at hand. "The Blackridge tribe is a big threat and they must be stopped, by any means necessary. They are an abomination and a threat not only to our very existence, but also to our peace and unity as well." He turns to face Deyanira in particular, emphasizing how important this situation is, "We are too mature to be fighting over lover's quarrels at this time. So we need to be on guard at all times."

While Juan returns to addressing the crowd of hyenas, a female white lion makes her way over to the crowd, carrying a large brown club in her right hand. Before she reaches her target, however, she is immediately addressed by the male white lion, who smirks while noticing her from the corner of his eye, "Figured it was you, Amelia. Is everything holding up well?"

Amelia nuzzles Juan and wraps her arms around him, whereas the male lion puts an arm around her waist in return. Only after a quick nuzzle in return does Juan finally address the hyena crowd before them, awaiting his next speech. Instead of a following speech, Juan raises his left arm up high and declares with a roar, "UNITED WE STAND!!!"

The hyena crowd before them begin cheering in return with whooping cries in rallying support, giving the same chant as the lion chiefs. The two groups are just as ready to face this threat together so they can put an end to its evil influence.

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Amelia and Juan take turns keeping watch while assisting the hyena tribe with keeping guard over their own territory. Even the hyenas pay the lions back their dues with several warrior hyenas taking turn-based shifts with assistance in keeping guard.

It is in the middle of the night when a golden furred male lion warrior approaches Amelia and Bunny, wielding a sword as his primary choice of weapon. Upon reaching the lioness, the golden lion reports, "No further activity along the borders. Everything is clear for now."

"Did you find anything of value that could be worth tracking down the Blackridge hideout?" Amelia asked in return.

The golden lion shakes his head and reports, "That's a negative, Chief. Nothing of value was located."

"Okay Charlie; tell me this - why did Boris say he saw tracks where the intruders were last seen?" Amelia checked behind him. "Last report I heard, it was him and another warrior lion coming back and relating that they saw tracks passing through the territory."

Charlie later blushes, unable to come up with an answer. Flustered, the muscular lion sputters, "Chief, I can't say why, but I believe those guys covered their tracks somehow."

Amelia grows perplexed at first but after giving the problem some thought, the chieftess ascertains, "Now that you mention it, we do have a really big problem on our hands. These Blackridge guys are smart and deadly, so we'll need to somehow match their game or stay one step ahead."

"Which is why we have secret traps installed to catch these guys." Bunny taps his head with his index finger to signify the importance of staying one step ahead of their rivals, both literally and figuratively speaking. "If these Blackridge punks ever decide to return, they won't know what hit them!"

"What if we destroyed them from the inside out?" Deyanira comes over carrying a bowl of something in her hands. The female hyena joined the conversation after picking up on the state of affairs regarding the Blackridge situation. So she decided to drop in her two cents in the conversation. Little did she know how useful her proposition would be.

Both lion chieftess and hyena warrior stare at Deyanira for a bit, contemplating the idea. They didn't take long to go through with it in acceptance. Amelia suggests, "We can send one of our own in there to infiltrate their ranks - that can work."

"Destroy them from the inside out while they're the ones proclaiming world dominance! I love it! Your idea is the best, Deyanira!" While Bunny commends Deyanira for her new idea, Kirby approaches to meet them out of inquiry, hoping to find something to work with. "So what do we have, guys? Is there a plan we can go on?"

Deyanira smirks while mentioning, "I brought up my idea of spying on the Blackridge tribe - we send some of our own in there so they can report back to us."

Turning to face Kirby directly, Deyanira adds, "We could use some big strong men in that field, so what do you say, Kirby? Are you in or not?"

Kirby begins to step away from Deyanira advancing on him, flirtatiously inviting him to become a spy for them. Bunny notices this and grabs Deyanira's shoulder to pull her back. The female hyena then turns pouty at Bunny shaking his head at her disapprovingly. The striped hyena male goes on to chastise her with a huff, "You can stop doing that. You see he's not interested in you in that way. If you were in that situation, do you really think your charm and appeal would work on those Blackridge thugs?"

Deyanira is only silent in return while pouting. Only after a brief silence does Deyanira remark, "At least my revenge will be complete. I can use my advances and

then slaughter them all. They deserve to be wiped out completely for what they've done.”

“Yeah, but flirting your way into their ranks and using a flirting advance to send someone in is not going to do the trick.” Bunny reminded her once more. “We need to prepare long and hard to make sure we're ready to infiltrate this group. If we can figure out in advance what they're up to, then we have a better chance at stopping them.”

Deyanira once again brushes Bunny off and hisses defiantly at him. Acting like a spoiled brat, she rants at Bunny, “You are not my chieftain! You don't tell me what I can and can't do!”

“STOP!!” A commanding voice rings throughout the area where an imposing male hyena enters the scene, his eyes hardening at the sight before him. Two hyena warriors flanked him, one on each side of him for added protection.

“H-hildebrandt! Where were you?!” Both Bunny and Deyanira turn to face the source of the new voice. But while Bunny is surprised, Deyanira's expression does not change. Instead, she appears more annoyed than before; she begins to fume, “And who is this dingus strutting in here like he owns the place?!”

“Excuse me but I am Hildebrandt Bodega, chieftain of the Loren tribe. You do realize you're demeaning a tribal leader who has the power to execute you, correct?” Hildebrandt stares at Deyanira with a powerful, yet stoic expression. The hyena guards, as well as the hyena warrior, move to nab the female hyena but Hildebrandt raises his hand up to dismiss their actions as unnecessary. Even Amelia joins the confrontation to pull Deyanira aside only for the female hyena to squeak angrily, “Let go of me!!”

SMACK!

Amelia slaps Deyanira across the face, leaving the female hyena rubbing her cheek in shock. The angered lioness proceeds to rant in her face, “Do you even realize how rude and disrespectful you're being right now?! We have a huge crisis on our hands and you're acting like a spoiled brat! You are not a princess! If you had any respect for anyone, you wouldn't be the way you are now! You are not untouchable! You're real fortunate you weren't impaled on the spot, otherwise you'd be getting buried right about now!”

Deyanira returns the tirade with a snarky retort, “News flash, Missy - my entire tribe was slaughtered and I was almost beaten to death! How do you think I'm supposed to feel after going through all that?! Last thing I need is some

smart-aleck primrose lion woman telling me what I can and cannot do! I can do what I want and act how I want!"

"We'll keep that in mind the next time you cry for help after being stranded or lost." Amelia retorted equally, "After learning about your history and how you act, no one would dare take you in. Just because you're the victim of a genocide doesn't mean you act all high and mighty and vindictive. Who cares if you're endangered?"

"I do!!!" Fuming, the female hyena begins to step away to calm down when the hyena chieftain approaches them, having heard the entire back and forth tirade. His gaze is fixed firmly on Deyanira where he assumes, "So, you're the one who's escaped a genocide? You must be very fortunate to survive. However, judging by your actions and tone, I can tell that you are desperate for revenge and traumatized. I caution you not to take your anger out on us as you will face some sort of punishment if this continues but we are worthy of respect, just as you are worthy of respect. What is your name?"

"Deyanira. My name is Deyanira." The female hyena responded tersely. "And what do you propose that we do? My plan was to just spy on them."

The smirk on Hildebrandt's face is enough to chill anyone's bones. On seeing this, Deyanira realizes she's talked herself straight into a trap - a good trap, but a trap nonetheless.

"Your source of rage and revenge is this Blackridge tribe, correct?" Hildebrandt assessed. When Deyanira nods at his assumption, Hildebrandt smirks once more at the female hyena before him. At the realization of what's coming next, Deyanira pales and backs away, unable to speak. Matching her move for move, Hildebrandt advances forward, speaking out his mind to the female hyena before him. He already has his mind made up and the punishment assignment in store for her. The hyena chieftain then commands, "Since your quest for revenge lies with this Blackridge tribe, how about you go in there and infiltrate their ranks? You will be the bait that leads directly to their downfall. Once we have a map and pinpoint their location, you will be sent there. Amelia, Juan, and I have discussed matters privately between ourselves regarding the threat and we believe you are best suited for their assignment. We will send backup to accompany you should you get yourself in trouble."

Deyanira isn't sure if Hildebrandt was bluffing or if she was dreaming or if this is what she is hearing correctly. One thing is certain - this is certainly not a game. She is being directly asked - no, assigned - to infiltrate an enemy tribe to destroy from the inside out. And this is no ordinary tribe, either. This is the same tribe that slaughtered and destroyed her village and almost killed her herself. Deyanira may

not realize it herself, but she is about to make her revenge plot come true. Faced with this situation, Deyanira has a choice - reject it and keep fighting or accept the offer and plan the destruction.

Even if Deyanira followed through with her decision in infiltrating the Blackridge tribe, there are so many unknowns; so many possibilities of what can go wrong. But between her quest for vengeance and revenge and her own life, the female hyena did have a choice to make. And she didn't even have to brainstorm about it.

Deyanira doesn't even think twice about her decision. She wanted revenge and she wanted it now. Balling up her hands, Deyanira remarks with a deep breath, "Send me in there. I'll be the one to break them down."

Hildebrandt chuckles darkly, causing Deyanira to eyeball him suspiciously. Her suspicions are later confirmed when the hyena chieftain ascertains, "Who said you were going in there alone? We agreed to send some backup to assist you and that is what we are going to do. From the Loren tribe, Kirby and Bunny will go with you. From the River tribe, Bruno and Benito will assist you."

Deyanira couldn't help but chuckle at the thought of lions and hyenas working together to take down a common enemy. Already, she can picture the scene in her mind - her with a couple of lion and hyena warriors working together in fighting the evil army. In this case, lions and hyenas are no longer regarded as mortal enemies but as new allies.

Deyanira suggests, "Hmph, I suppose I have no choice in the matter of having backup with me. But I'll do it. I'll set their village on fire and burn it to the ground! They will all pay! All of them!"

Hildebrandt remarks in satisfaction, "Very well! We will get started right away! Once dawn hits, you should be all set! I will inform Kirby and Bunny of the situation while Juan and Amelia inform their people of this important matter." Hildebrandt begins to leave but when he turns to leave, he whirls back to Deyanira with one final piece of advice, "And as for you, miss Deyanira, be careful out there yourself. I have heard rumors that these guys are very unpredictable, so watch yourself."

Deyanira draws a breath, "I will. And I will be careful."

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Kirby and Bunny wanted nothing more than to go back home. In Kirby's case, the spotted hyena warrior almost melted into a puddle upon learning he will be

accompanying Deyanira as backup to infiltrate the Blackridge tribe. All the flirting and advancing she's done at him cements his stance. And the hyena himself consistently said he wasn't interested.

Bunny, however, felt differently. After all the fighting between them - telling Deyanira how to conduct herself and stop being disrespectful and the accusations and assumptions Deyanira made regarding Bunny's marital status - it took Bunny's wife, La Stella, to eventually put Deyanira in her place in defense of her husband. This is before Deyanira, Kirby, and Bunny left for their covert spy mission.

As for the lion warriors assisting the hyenas, there is Bruno and Benito. Charlie offered to tag along for extra backup, so his request was granted. So not only does Deyanira have some extra support, she also has some extra muscle to depend on.

"Man, this sucks. But at least it's better than being captured and beaten!" Taking up the rear of the squad with Benito and Charlie, Bruno sarcastically and jokingly laments on the situation they're in, already finding themselves in a sort of pickle. The lions are already holding torches to use while the hyenas are carrying weapons.

The middle lion in the group, Benito, chuckles mirthlessly, "I really don't feel an ounce of pity for these Blackridge guys. They're getting what's coming to them and they deserve it. This is the perfect opportunity."

Observing the brown male lion beside him, Charlie also comments, "Least they can expect is a full-scale invasion when we're supposed to be just spies in their land. They won't even know what hit them."

"As long as we make it out in one piece while destroying them, all of us should be good." Deyanira reminded them. "And you're all helping me. So I don't want anyone turning their backs on me. Got it?"

Kirby huffs, "Who put you in charge of this operation? You're certainly not the leader among the six of us."

Bunny is more annoyed than Kirby and their lion comrades behind them. But after sighting a potential hideout along with various mammals walking about in black gear, this had to be the spot. The striped hyena nudges Kirby on the side and whispers, "I think this is it. We're finally here."

While Deyanira takes a moment to visually search around the territory, she catches sight of a storage shack a few paces ahead of her. However, the female hyena suddenly freezes from a booming voice and laughter following suit.

“HAHAHAHAHA....!! So the last lone hyena is captured to advance my war plans, huh? Good for you! All of you deserve a reward!”

Stepping out of the shadows is a large black / gray western dragon, clapping slowly in amusement while eyeing his prize with glee. The dragon's azure blue eyes have a manic glint to them where he inspects Deyanira up close and personal. When he notices the 5-man team around her, the dragon instantly grows suspicious. “Where do you all come from? Surely you must not have thought of this on your own. Or did someone put you up to this ploy?”

The western dragon blows smoke from his nose directly at the small group before him, indicating his anger. He then begins roaring to signal his minions to assemble and attack. But while Bunny and Kirby scatter, Deyanira suddenly becomes deadweight and she drops to the ground in a heap. The lions, however, grow spooked at first but then recover with Benito bellowing his lungs out in a powerful, guttural roar to signal the call for battle and aid. Then something unexpected happens...

**\*SHING!\***

The western dragon attempts to fly his way out of the sight of the new arrivals; just when he lifts himself off the ground, a sword is embedded through his chest, completely impaling him. Having struck his heart dead center, the evil dragon crashes to the ground in a heap, catching everyone by surprise. Everything that follows happens in a flash.

The River tribe lion warriors roar again collectively to intimidate the now leaderless Blackridge tribe members into fleeing. The black / gray dragon must have been the source of their bravery, their machismo, their cunning, their terrifying acts. And with him now dead, some of the Blackridge rivals begin to back away and flee, while some hold their ground in an attempt to stand and fight back. However, they are soon overpowered and are no match for the lion warriors of the River tribe, who easily pick off the cowards.

While Kirby joins the fighting lions, Bunny stays behind with Deyanira after surveying the scene before him. He knows Deyanira is playing dead just to trick them into submission and he gently rouses the female hyena to wake her up. “Deyanira, you can get up now. It's all over.”

The moment Deyanira stands up, Bunny immediately shoves her aside in a side tackle when arrows suddenly start flying. Suddenly there is an explosion up ahead; Kirby must have found some special explosive weaponry because these Blackridge guys were hiding some serious firepower.

“Kirby! You're gonna kill them!” While Bunny stays low with Deyanira in keeping her safe, the striped hyena warrior cautions his spotted counterpart in avoiding the River tribe lions. And just what were these special explosive arrows coated with that made them so explosive? A special chemical compound that made them blow up on impact.

Another arrow pierces the air in Deyanira's direction with Bunny shoving the female hyena away again. He also dives aside. The culprit is a gray fox archer trying to bury an arrow through the female hyena, but he doesn't get the chance when he is quickly discovered. When the archer reloads again, a thrown dagger slices into his abdomen, the momentum disarming him and throwing him onto the ground on his back. Deyanira doesn't even hesitate to retrieve the dagger and execute her dying target, stabbing him over and over again until he is dead.

Another explosion rocks the territory - these arrows are being aimed at the ground when a larger explosion hits, even catching one of the River lion warriors in the blast. Thankfully, Benito's only injury is having the wind knocked out of him. But the group isn't done with the destruction, not until the territory has been completely destroyed.

“Man, I'm glad I'm out of range of that. I almost got vaporized.” Benito rolls onto his feet after a few breaths and proceeds to shake himself, all while his allies continue their destructive rampage of the enemy territory. The lions continue their assault on the Blackridge territory along with Kirby making quick work of the arrows against them. But Deyanira and Bunny, after some time, wander to the storage shack where they hit a strange jackpot of illegal explosives - all fireworks.

Before Deyanira and Bunny can even access the cache of illegal weapons, they have to duck away yet again, this time from a dangerous arrow being discharged from Kirby. When the arrow hits its mark, it's all over. The Loren and River tribe fighters did not have to put up much of a fight; when they return, Hildebrandt, Amelia, and Juan will certainly have an interesting story to hear - one that they will actually see and believe.

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“So let's get this straight, you guys waltzed straight in there and we're about to hand Deyanira over when you guys killed the leader? That's when everything changed?” Hildebrandt, Amelia, and Juan are standing around inside of a large tent where the hyena and lion return from their special operation. It was well approaching dusk time so torches were installed to keep the place lit. But as much as Hildebrandt enjoyed listening to the satisfying story, he still couldn't wrap his

mind around how quickly things went. Instead of a long, arduous final battle, the team ended up picking off the stragglers and fighters of their rivals alike while also leveling the enemy territory - not something one would expect in a final showdown.

Kirby is present and so is Bunny, Bruno, Charlie, and Benito. Deyanira, however, was absent because as Bunny put it, she wanted to be alone to grieve for her lost family. Hildebrandt then made a suggestion on accepting her into the Loren tribe, where Kirby informs the hyena chieftain that he and Bunny will relay the information to Deyanira.

Back to the matter at hand, Juan mentions a connecting factor to the final battle, which he discloses to the rest of the small meeting group. "If those fireworks weren't enough, then the sharp explosions would have been a sign that something's going on." With silence from the hyena chieftain, the white lion nuzzles and hugs his wife while further relating, "My wife and I were ready to run over to help you guys out when we saw the bright lights going everywhere. What strikes me as odd is this: how did these guys get their hands on fireworks?"

"My guess is a black market or something. They must have gotten their hands on those fireworks that way. Either that, or they were stolen." Amelia reported. "But black markets are extremely rare in these cases. Somehow, these guys stole those fireworks somehow." Amelia reported.

"It's a pretty awkward predicament that everyone has found themselves in, but it's more of a strange problem for these guys. Factor in the weird way that they turned tail and ran from you guys killing their leader, it boils down to the fact that the Blackridge tribe is nothing more than a bunch of arrogant bullies." Juan explained. He separates himself from Amelia while brushing his mane with his hand. "They act all high and mighty while under their leader's influence and later turn cowardly when their chief is killed. My wife and I saw the evidence in the sky."

A brief flashback occurs with Juan staring up into the sky, seeing the bright colors exploding in the sky. The River tribe chieftain is clutching a spear in his right hand while staring at the colored sky. The whistling and shrieking from the fireworks is also in the background, drowning out the battle roars of the lion warriors.

Coming back to the present, Juan is outside of the meeting tent pointing upwards at the sky to emphasize his point as well as showing Hildebrandt the strange twist to the battle. The hyena chieftain hums, "It's very strange how these thugs acquired this illegal weaponry but since the problem has been taken care of, we should celebrate this victory."

“Call everyone together and have them meet at the bonfire later on. We will make this victory a lasting memory!” Hildebrandt declared.

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Wiping her face, Deyanira is silently crying to herself, having curled up by a riverbank. All the rage, the anger, the resentment towards the enemies of her slain tribe has finally faded. With her mind clear, all she can reflect on is her dead people, her family whom she was close to. All she can do now is grieve.

The female hyena begins weeping hysterically, crushed by the loss of her entire family. But she is picked up by a familiar hyena who is jogging to meet her.

Upon meeting Deyanira directly, Kirby kneels down to hoist Deyanira up and pulls her into a hug, letting her cry on his shoulder. Kirby rubs her back to comfort her, and he whispers in her ear, “Let it out, Deyanira. You're safe now.”

The crying continues until Deyanira is silent, leaving the male hyena to cradle her, holding her in his arms. and rocking her. Deyanira's crying eventually subsides but after bawling her eyes out for so long, the female hyena is still crushed. Her emotional weight is a heavy anvil crushing her, which she may have to deal with for the rest of her life. But in an attempt to further console her, Kirby extends the invitation out to her for the upcoming celebration.

“Deyanira,” Kirby began, still holding her, “we’re going to be celebrating our victory later on. Would you like to join us in the bonfire celebration?”

“I don't know what I want to do now...” Deyanira squeaked. Her crying resumes where she sobs, “I have nothing left...!”

The female hyena begins crying in hysterics again, leaving Kirby heartbroken. But something comes to his mind about an experience he's had. He gently rouses the squeaking hyena and relates, “In a way, I can kinda relate to your situation to an extent. I was the only male while growing up and I was treated badly.”

“But you never had your entire family slaughtered before your eyes, almost being beaten to death yourself! How does that relate to what I’ve gone through?!” Deyanira protested. “You're not the lone survivor of a genocide like I am!!!”

“No, but I was disowned when I left.” Kirby frankly admitted. “I forgot about it in time but sometimes certain things trigger nightmares I have regarding my old clan.”

Tense, shaky silence from Deyanira prompts Kirby to nuzzle the female hyena in further consolation. She is too drained to fight; instead, Deyanira brings up a valid point, "You guys didn't pillage anything from that enemy tribe?"

"We're not barbarians, Deyanira. We are hyena warriors." Kirby reminded her. "Just like the River tribe, we are peaceful. We don't loot or anything unless absolutely necessary during times of war. In this case, everything was destroyed when I blasted those fireworks apart."

Cue a brief image of the charred remains of the Blackridge tribe territory where there is nothing but scorched land and charcoaled remains. Nothing of value could be salvaged that was worth anything.

Back to the present, Kirby nuzzles Deyanira once more and begins to wipe her face when she turns away and begins crying once more, this time sobbing with her face in her hands. While Kirby wracks his mind on what to do, he suddenly gets an idea when Bunny comes over to see what was going on.

"Honestly, I feel sorry for her now. She didn't deserve this." Mentioning Deyanira's plight to Kirby, Bunny kneels down to embrace the crying female hyena. Kirby, in turn, makes his plan known to Bunny in a request, "Hey Bunny, what if Deyanira joined us in our ranks officially?"

At first, the striped hyena is taken aback a little by the suggestion when he reflects on his own status as a married warrior. After a bit of processing on the matter, Bunny agrees to the demand, "That's a great idea! But to make it official, she'll have to see Hildebrandt for that."

"The chiefs always have the final say on the matter. I think she'll make a great addition to the tribe." Kirby responded in satisfaction. When he stands up to leave, he beckons Bunny to follow him, bringing Deyanira along. "Come on; let's go see Hildebrandt and tell him our plan."

"Where are you taking me...??" Deyanira can barely function after crying her eyes out for so long. At first she is being dragged when she finds some strength of her own to walk and keep pace, but instead of defiance, she is timid now. But after Kirby explains his idea, she reluctantly accepts it.

They are on their way to see Hildebrandt when the hyena chieftain himself is coming to meet them, having left a recent meeting with another tribal chief. He instead invites them to his personal tent while demanding, "Kirby, Bunny, what do you guys need?"

“Bunny and I want to know if Deyanira can be accepted to the Loren tribe.” Kirby requested, his tail wagging softly.

“It will be a big help to her and aid her in her recovery process. Her new family will be like the one she's never had. I will see to Deyanira's advancement personally on her skills for the next few weeks and then we will see. For now, she is welcome to stay here as her new home.” Hildebrandt explained.

The female hyena is then enveloped in a group hug by Kirby, Bunny, and Hildebrandt where they are all accepting of her, despite her flaws. Her new family will be a big aid in her road to healing and recovery and she can absolutely count on it.