

Once there, he was faced with a nasty situation. A certain group of unpleasant people blocked the way of the believers who were just returning from the ceremony.

"What is going on here?", the bat asked, as he approached the unfriendly group.

"You have to abandon the old faith", the tall bull replied. "Our god is merciful, so if you convert to our faith, you will be spared."

"If only you would convince us as you do now and not bully others, it would be better."

"Those who cannot be persuaded have to be taken care of."

"Taken care of? Looking at you, it seems like you can't even take care of the fleas in your hair."

The bull got quite angry very quickly. His rage was so great that even his companions became slightly afraid. He wanted to hit the person who had upset him with his fist, but the bat caught his hand, twisted it along with its owner and kicked him so hard that he toppled over and rode a few meters on the ground like that.

"You have started this fight", Sulmir said sternly. "If I see you harassing anyone again, it will not end pleasantly for you. Understood?"

"You will regret it...", the bull said, as he was getting up from the ground.

"Spare me those empty threats. Get out of here now. Otherwise, I'll help you with that."

It was clear that some of these "followers of new faith" did not like the outcome of this meeting. Sulmir's face, however, betrayed that he was not eager to negotiate and was close to fulfilling his promise. The troublemakers began to scatter, clearing the way for the residents of the settlement.

"Will you manage on your own to reach your houses?", the bat asked the nearest person.

"We will manage", the old cat replied. "Thank you, mister."

"If I were you, I'd avoid the meetings for some time. Few days should be enough. It is necessary to solve this situation once and for all."

"Do not hurt them, please."

"If they want to end this peacefully, nothing bad will happen to them. You can be sure about that."

The old man bowed and started walking with the other settlers to their homes. Bat stood like that for a long moment, looking at the believers. Then, he went inside his friend's house. He saw that she, as well as other priestesses, were arranging furniture in a circle.

"Will you help, Sulmir?", Dalbora asked.

"Sure", the bat replied. "But why are you doing this?"

"For the meeting. We will discuss about how can solve this conflict of believes."

"Who will come here?"

"Believers that are important and brave. As well as... beings similar to you."

"Then why do you need me?", Sulmir asked out of confusion.

"Because you have a lot of experience in these matters", the doe looked him straight into the eyes.

- Eh... Fine.

"I have moments myself where I want them to be send to Navia, but..."

"This is not something that's befitting a priestess. That's for sure."

"Indeed."

The furniture was quickly set up, as the priestesses had planned. Except for Dalbora, the women were to serve the newcomers. More beings quickly began to arrive. About a dozen came into the chamber and spread out as each wished.

"Thank you for coming so quickly", the doe bowed. "I assume that everyone knows the purpose of the meeting?"

"The Slavic faith is under the threat", the muscular deer said. "The dissenters must be purged."

"We talked about it, Blizbor. No slaughter. I invited my friend here who had already solved such disputes."

"Looks like some kind of sorcerer."

"I'm not a sorcerer, bes", Sulmir replied calmly. "You can uncover your third eye, if you want."

"You know who I am. However, I don't know who you are."

"I think I know", the she-wolf interrupted the dialogue.

"Really?", the puzzled wolf next to her has spoken.

"If I remember correctly, they call him "Red Phantom of the North"."

"Eh...", Sulmir sighed heavily. "Silly name, but you're right. That's me."

"So you are a leech?", bes asked with a malicious tone.

"If you want to insult me then spare your breath. I am similar to many kinds of vampires, but upirs were already in the world before the word "vampire" began to spread."

"Prove that you are similar to us."

The bat rolled its eyes, but then, he accepted demon's request. It could be seen how his membrane-covered hands began to change into upper limbs that were similar to those that other participants had. Some were puzzled by this occurrence.

"You really are a demon", Blizbor stated.

"Indeed", Sulmir nodded. "Can we get to the point now?"

"The high priestess says that you solved such disputes earlier."

"And that's true. We are dealing with conflict of believes. Judging by their behavior, they are religious fanatics. And it's hard to get along with such people."

"Ha!", the bes shouted with satisfaction. "So we'll organize a fight?"

"If by "fight" you mean "slaughter", then no. Such communities are maintained by charismatic people. If you would get rid of them, there is a good chance that ordinary believers would abandon this battle."

"Well... if it means I'll be able to send mortals to Veles, I'm all for it."

"A detailed plan still needs to be made", upir said calmly. "Do you have a map of this area?"

"I do", the wolf replied and started spreading a piece of paper on the table.

"Thank you, vukodlak."

"I already have a suggestion for the meeting place", Blizbor stood up and began to show the place on the map. "Here is the hill which is located near the forest. We know that this is where they usually gather."

"Have you organized a meeting?"

"It'll be held today after sunset. It was said that "we will come to an agreement on our believes"."

"They are planning an attack, that's for sure. They will gather a group of warriors, so we also need to form our own as the insurance."

"I can take care of that."

"Alright", Sulmir nodded. "Actually, I wanted to tell you to command this group during the meeting."

"Eh...", Blizbor sighed. "I wanted to personally butcher these sons of bitches."

"You will defend the combatants. And if there is a skirmish then you will have the opportunity to send the opponents beyond the bloody Danube."

"Hmm... So be it."

"We need to make a precise attack. Who has experience in moving through the shadows?"

"I do", she-wolf replied. "I'll end them swiftly."

"I would abstain from killing. However, we are dealing with religious fanatics. So you can go and deal with it."

"Vukodlak next to me is familiar with a bow."

"It will come in handy, if we'll need to remove important units."

"So this is the plan?", bes asked.

"Only thing left are the details."

"And then?"

"We will start after dusk."

The final touches tied together the main points agreed upon at the meeting. This meant that the entire course of events that would follow had also been refined. After this council, the participants left the priestesses and headed for the meeting place.

As they made their way to the meeting, some residents began to join the group. They were armed mostly with farm tools, but most were confident. Bat smiled at this sight and remembered to change his hands for wings.

It didn't take them long to reach the meeting place. A small gust of wind moved the branches of the nearby forest, which looked ominous at this part of a day. This did not discourage the crew and they waited until the opposite side arrived on the scene.

"What is your name?", Sulmir asked the wolf quietly.

"Nadar", vukodlak with a bow replied.

"Do you remember where you are supposed to stand?"

"Of course. I wonder how long the fight will last."

"It won't be long. For them or for us."

"For us?", Nadar asked out of confusion.

"There is always a chance that something will go wrong. For example, they can take a witch with them."

"So we'll lose?"

"I didn't say that", upir shook his head. "Looking at us, the enemy should get a miracle, if they want to defeat us."

"I will try my best. For everyone, especially for Milena."

"Your partner? The one that was sitting next to you?"

"I can do a lot for her."

"I can imagine that. I wish you for the best for both of you."

"Thank you", vukodlak bowed.

"Oh... We have company."

Part of the squad that was defending old faith was hidden from the sight of the enemy, who had just come from the side of the forest. The defenders looked at the boar in ornate armor. They guessed that he was the leader. He had a rather small collection of warriors with him at first glance.

"You'll talk, upir", Blizbor growled. "I know that I'll smash his head as soon as he'll open his mouth."

"I have arrived", the boar stated with a loud tone.

"Welcome. I had my doubts that we would meet at all."

"I don't know you. However, I see that you fraternize with infidels."

"I have friends here who asked me to conduct negotiations."

"Negotiations?", the hostile leader began to laugh. "Why should I negotiate with you?"

"Then what's the point of this conversation?"

The boar quickly gestured with his hand. After this gesture, more warriors began

to come out of the thick forest. The commander smiled sinisterly. Then, Blizbor came out and brought more defenders out of hiding as the answer.

"Very well...", the enemy commander shrugged his shoulders. "However, you won't expect this move."

From another location, but still not far from the enemy troops, another boar that was wearing robes appeared. Sulmir guessed who he might be and said to bes that he'll handle him. Blizbor will defend the troop, as previously agreed.

"I assume you guys don't have a sorcerer?", the boar asked with pride.

"Not exactly...", upir replied with a smile on his face.

"You will not win this. Fire!"

A hail of arrows was sent by the opponents towards the defenders. Sulmir shouted really loud, sending a wave that neutralized the attack. Blizbor gave the signal to attack and the bat started flying directly to the sorcerer.

Followers of the new faith also went up on the offensive. In the name of their god, they wanted to slaughter the infidels. The sorcerer wanted to help in the attack to decimate the demonic part of defensive, but had to focus on the oncoming upir.

At first, the boar summoned a gust of wind that missed the bat. Even the fiery blast completely missed the winged creature. Sulmir caught him with his feet, tossed him upward and finished him off in mid-air.

The rest of the combatants were fighting with each other. Their commander was still alive, caught in the middle of this conflict. Nadar, however, saw him perfectly from top of the hill and with one accurate shot hit him between the eyes, making the enemies leaderless.

Religious disputes are extremely fierce, however, and the rest of the followers of the new faith continued to fight. They knew they had no chance. Still, they preferred to die in defense of their believes rather than leave without any honor.