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So I shall wait

by Viacheslav Lazurin

I see him again—the last demon from the Crimson Nebula. He approaches me leaving his burning spaceship behind. Never will it fly again and neither will mine. This is the end. In this desert under unknown stars, we no longer can escape from each other.

Five, six, seven shots hit into his very chest until my gun is out of crystals. He does not stop. Like a big shadow with two red flares of eyes. Throwing the gun, I prepare the lash. Each link of it vibrates and sparks, as they are ready to release their power. He is almost here. He changes. His body melts and reshapes and I know what happens. The combat transformation. Extra limbs grow from his center like petals of black flower. There is no mouth, but a wide crack full of long teeth.

I know this pattern. It is invincible.

Each strike of the lash results in lightning. I keep hitting him lest he comes too closely. He is fast and silent. He attacks from different positions. He is everywhere. He is nowhere. He is the night turned into ghost. I see the blood on the sand. His blood. I have killed hundreds of his breed, but still don't know if they feel pain. Something glitters. It's an ax, their ritual weapon. I have not seen how it appeared in his limb, though I know they can hide non-organic tools in their bodies.

I need to stay alive, at least, until dawn.

He fades out in darkness and shows up again. On the left. On the right. I hear nothing except for sound of the lash heating the air. I keep striking. Keep striking... The pain stings the

right shoulder and dominates all my senses. His ax. It has scarcely touched me, but I feel how the immense pain pulses and reaches my heart.

He stays in front of me. Not moving. He knows he has won.

My hand is still strong. One single movement and I smash his face with the lash getting to the brain... Strange. So slowly does his body fall. It shakes in convulsions switching from one shape to another. The black flesh tries to reorganize itself in a desperate attempt to save dying cells. It happens slowly. With no sound. And I can sense his agony as though some part of me vanishes with him too. I share his pain. Now I know what they feel when dying.

My mind falls into endless nothing wherein the space and time collide and acquire new meanings. My name is no longer relevant. My life is no longer relevant. Even the memories of who I was and who I am make no sense in the new formula of existence. I was a prey turned into hunter. My race would have been exterminated, if we had not accepted the specific mutation making us stronger. We fought against the demons from the Crimson Nebula. We took the lashes, charged with energy of stars, and made the demons run. We destroyed their lair in nuclear fire and went after the last survivors.

Now this all does not matter as the communion is being committed.

I see the stars that went out before I was born.

I see the flowers in the worlds that no longer exist.

I see the explosion in which the world begins again.

I find myself on the knees touching black remains. My shoulder no longer hurts. My lash is thrown away... My lash? It caused so much pain and it is not mine. Not anymore. Getting on my feet, I notice the ax on the sand. Being exposed to automatic impulse, I pick it up willing to hide it

inside, however, this body is too weak and defective. I look at the blade with spots of two colors. This is how the communion is done. Just mix some blood in order to unite and to become a part of infinity. That's why axes are empty inside—to keep the liquid seed in it. I see the pieces of crystals in my previous body and hear the gunfire again. Seven shots. The phantom pain tears my chest and I am unable to stop this illusion. This body is sensitive to memories.

My ship is destroyed. Even if it were not so, I still would not be able to start it.

I do not remember how.

Not only have I lost the bigger chunk of myself, I have also lost the part of my personality. I try to reshape, but my power is also gone. The eyes... What I still can do is to rebuild my eyes... After little transformation, I am able to see a bit better through the night.

I go into unknown. I have to find a shelter until the local sun shows up. Although I have lost my power, my weakness is still with me. It is always with me whatever pattern I turn into. This is the cost of communion. I have to find a new home in which it is as dark and cold as it was in the Crimson Nebula. In this case, I will rest as long as needed to enhance this organism later on. This organism is weird. One heart, oxygen consuming systems. Fragile framework. How is it possible to survive in this? And brain... Unable to focus on more than one thought at once. The only hope is that this planet has better patterns to borrow.

Instinctively, I feel the danger. The spark of fear at the bottom of my skull forces me to go faster. Too late. The beams of rising sun heat my back and I feel how every cell of my skin is being killed. I fall on the sand and dig it with my ax. With my fingers. I throw myself in it like a worm and swallow the dry soil. The pain blinds me, but I try to get my head deeper and deeper, so, at least, the brain can survive. In here, I shall sleep until the time has come to rise again. Perhaps, I

shall not remember how everything began. Perhaps, I shall not remember my real home. But I must not forget my name.

I am Drac Ulla.

So I shall wait.