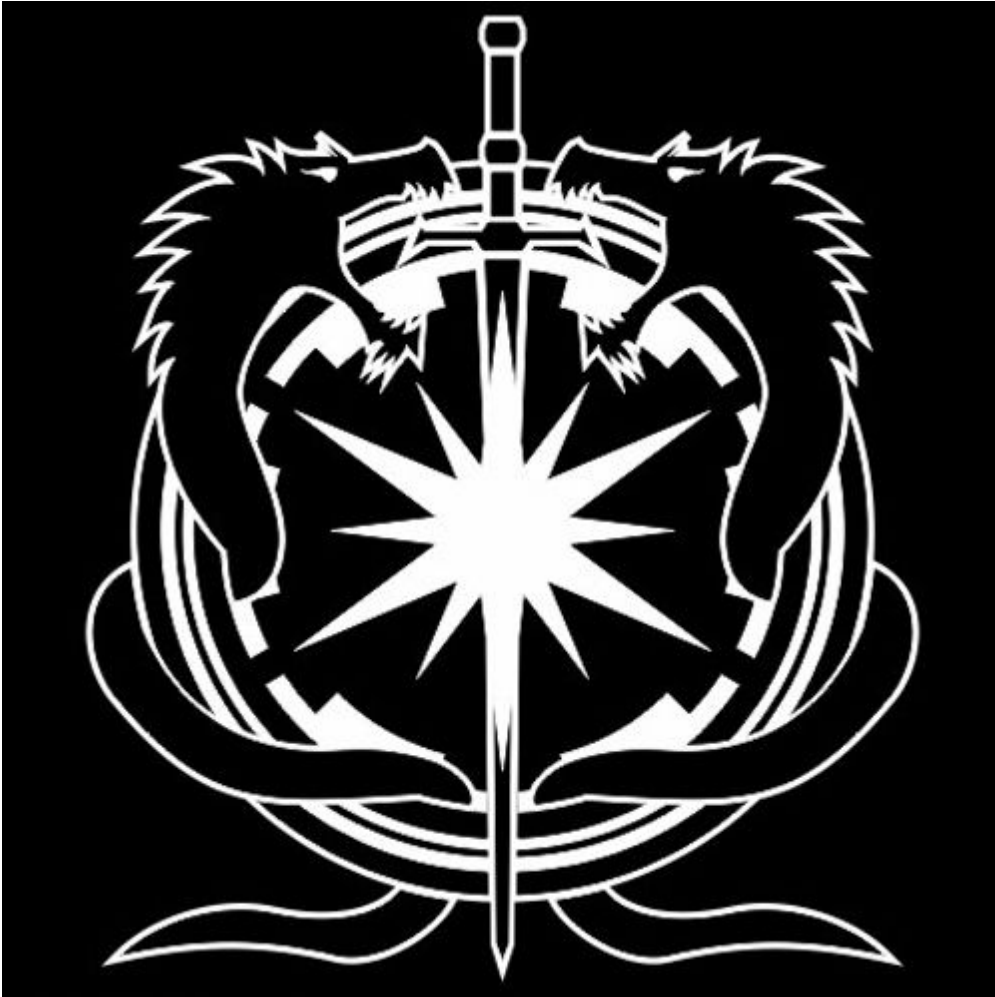


Oh Brother, My Brother

A story written by Lexiconus Qor



Submitted for *Monstrosities: The Awoken* Competition

Chapter 1: The Cat and Mouse Game

With the bitter saltiness of the cold sea waves washing up against his torn and bruised back, Lexiconus Qor lay almost lifeless against the white sandy shore. His slow breathing was all anyone could detect as life from him, while his crimson blood run from his shredded clothing and into the seas. The Dark Side slowed his blood flow into a steady pace in order to keep the Quarren alive, just enough so his healing abilities could painfully stitch together the last remnants of his muscle and leathery skin. Wincing and gritting his teeth in agony, Lexic forced himself through the exhausting ordeal until the wounds were sealed from bleeding, and then he forced himself to his feet and gained perspective. From what he remembered, he was fighting a horde of zombie fungus men on the outskirts of Ohmen, then his squadron were outnumbered and forced to the coast, from there his memory became blank and he awoke on this beach at sunset. Right now, the rising sun made him realised he slept far too long for his liking, and dry sand was never a good thing for Quarrens. He quickly knelt down, took a good handful of the salty water and splashed it across his head and neck, the water burnt like a cold winter's wind. Then the horrific images flashed before his eyes like lightning, a monolithic creature with thousands of limbs, a deafening shriek and a calling that could turn a veteran into mush. He shivered at the thought.

“I must find this Abyssal, and stop it at all costs!” Lexic clenched a fistful of sand tightly and growled in detest. Determined to strike back, the Quarren marched across the beach and towards dry land, this is where he hoped his allies were based and not in one of the capital ships above the planet. As Lexic looked up he saw the blur fires from the LAAT Gunship slowly circle and descend to him on the beach, Delak Krennel pushed the door open and assisted his Aedile up into the gunship, with a smirk he shook Lexic's hand. “Sir, we're here to help you over, so you can ‘greet’ the Abyssal,” The Tyr of Imperium gave a soft chuckle and tapped the pilot, motioning for him to take off. It was clear this wasn't going to be a conversation between little squid and big squid, but more of a precise calibre and possibly a rough-n-tumble. The ship soared through the low clouds and burst through their bags of water, as fingers of lightning struck against the metal and glass. The Aedile turned to Delak and tapped his shoulder for attention. “Where is it?” Delak brought up a hologram that depicted the Abyssal itself trenching through a small town, devouring the buildings with its prehensile tentacles and crushing the military resistance. With its wrath ongoing in the hologram, Delak began to speak. “Located south-east from here, the Abyssal stormed from the sea and made a crescent around the main continent, Dragan, so it could find the easiest access to Ohmen City. At least that's what we believed, until yesterday,” Delak then pointed out of the window to show the brutality of the monster's wrath. “For some reason, it doesn't move from this position and when our forces attack, it just spits,” Delak noted about the toxic red fluid that has been seen across its tracking movements. Your job, according to Emperor Xen, is to remove the threat immediately and at all costs, any questions?” The Quarren noticed the pilot stopped the gunship to hover close to the ground and leapt out, landing firmly and began to walk towards the Judeccan threat. “Yeah, how did you find me so fast?” With a smirk, the Tyr slapped the pilot and the LAAT slowly ascended. “We have our ways,

plus you took a weapon with a tracker so there's that." The ship quickly rose into the air and disappeared from sight. Leaving him no option, Lexic took in a large breath and strode across the jungle dirt and towards his opponent.

Chapter 2: Dafydd and Goliath

There was no doubt about it, the Abyssal was a huge monster to deal with. Even at this distance the monster still seemed to scrape the skies, and yet the lack of activity haunted the Quarren's logical thoughts. Why was it so silent, frozen and uninterested in the world? Why was it here in the first place? Did it actually care about the goals of Vanis, or was it just awoken by him and forced to search for a better resting place? Maybe that was it, Lexic could see this as a humble creature feeding itself back up again and readying itself for hibernation once more. Even though the first hibernation was forced, according to research, it still wasn't to be blamed or considered evil. An opening allowed the Quarren to walk through and he was greeted by a slow and slithering tentacle, grey and slimy in texture yet still very strong and heavy. An armoured vehicle lay crushed and bent underneath this particular limb, reminding Lexic that he shouldn't get on the creature's temper. Ahead of him, a small group of soldiers jogged over with their carbine rifles in hand and saluted the Skald of Imperium. "Sir, we've been told of your arrival and have waited with what little vehicles we have left. Our forces are slimming fast because each time we try to take down the beast, another soldier or vehicle is taken for food I guess," The soldier looked up at the grueling mouth of the Abyssal and shuddered. "Gives me the creeps to think of what's rotting inside there, worse than a Sarlacc pit." The Quarren nodded in agreement and then slowly walked over to the only vehicles left, there he saw a peculiar but wide satellite sitting on a recon vehicle.

"Sarge, what is that dish used for?" The ranking recon scout jogged in front and coughed to clear his throat. "To intercept incoming messages at a passive range sir. Basically if anyone make communication inside this planet only, we will catch it." Lexic nodded slowly and felt the inside of the dish, smooth and giving off small vibrations. "Interesting, can you aim it at the Abyssal? I have an idea." "Yes sir, but to have any decent effect, we would need to move it closer. The beast's vibrations don't touch the dish from this range, happily I might add." The scout nodded and climbed into the cockpit, starting the engine and rolling it closer. The Quarren jumped onto a side panel and stood on a metal lip as the vehicle began to drive into the huge shadow of the beast, while the vibrations began to become more violent. Slowly turning dreary and fearful for his life, Lexic began to see visions of the ground moving and shifting into life, as rotting hands dug themselves free of the dirt and tried to latch onto the tires of the vehicle. His head pounded and pulse in agonising pain, while the vehicle rumbled and rusted under his fingers and the corpse hands grew closer to his feet, snatching on what is left from his robes. The armoured vehicle halted and the visions of rust, rotting hands and cracked grounds suddenly ceased as if they were never there.

Chapter 3: A Series of Unfortunate Events

Lexic looked up to see the giant began to wobble and wade on the spot, splurging his red goo and mumbling in low whimpers. The Quarren slowly smirked as he saw the beast struggle, latch onto its own head and slowly turn from the settlement. The Abyssal seemed to had enough of its own hallucinations, turned its ugly head and stormed off towards the ocean. The scout peeked out from his cockpit in lost wonder and the soldiers behind the Quarren sprinted forward to watch in awe, then begin to scream out in celebrations. "You did it sir! You truly did it, the beast has left us!" Shots were fired into the air as the younger enlisted jumped and danced around in a joyous mood, but Lexic who jumped from the side of the hull and slowly rubbed his chin did not share this occasion. "We didn't defeat it, we just redirected it back into the sea where it's kind belongs." The Quarren sighed and called for a nearby gunship with his holocommunicator. It was time to see where this Abyssal was going, and whether this was truly the end of his terrifying reign. Left alone while the soldiers begin to pack up, Lexic remembered a small prayer he once heard.

"Lo there, do I see my father?

Lo there, do I see my mother?

And my sisters and brothers?

Lo there, do I see the line of my people back to the beginning!

*Lo, they do call to me, they bid me to take my place among them,
in the halls of Vahalla!*

Where the brave may live forever!"