

**Slash 'N Smash,
Market District,
Imperial City,
Cyrodiil,
Tamriel**

It was exactly on eight in the morning, a cold and crisp Morndas morning on the 5th of Frost Fall and the Dark Elf known as Lexiconus paced in front of the blunt weapon's door impatiently. His blood red eyes flickered across the mossy cobble below his feet, waiting for the doors to be unlocked by the shop owner. It wasn't long before the streets were filled by humans gasping and whispering to themselves, while silence fell. Lexic smirked and slowly turned, as he was faced by the giant Nord known as Cyris Oscura. A shiver tumbled down his spine as he gazed at the imposing figure, Cyris' one good eye delivering a fiery stare at the elf's crimson stare.

"About time you joined us, you goof! The doors are opening soon and we need your bounty money immediately!" Lexic snarled out, his fists clenching tightly. The nord wasn't phased by it and gave the dark elf a pat on the head, then walked and knocked on the door.

"Don't get too cocky kid, it's not like i'm buying weapons for you." The low authoritative tone of Cyris sent another shiver down Lexic's spine, but he was used to this anyway. This was an infamous man who took pride in stopping battles with just a stare. Lexic heard of his tales from eons ago, about the time the Black Hand himself charged head first into battles and cracked spines with swiftest of punches. He was heralded for his wisdom in the Destruction and Illusion fields of magic, so Lexic desired this brick wall above all else. The door was shoved open by Cyris, who strode inside without his companion.

"Shopkeep! Shopkeep, where are you!?" The voice of the nord bellowed across the shop's multi floors as a half dressed Orc came rushing down the stairs in a panic.

"Here sir! I apologise for the late opening, I have visitors you see." The orc shopkeep said in an embarrassed reply. Cyris thought nothing else of it, but when Lexic wandered inside and met the man, his eyes caught something very worrying. Stained with a rustic tone against his neck, the orc's blood dribbled down from four puncture wounds and onto his scraggy collar. The dark elf nervously tugged on Cyris' sleeve for his attention, but the duo were already heavily deep in business talk about blunt weaponry and claymores. Eager to pull his companion's attention, Lexic shouted out.

"Cyris! I need to speak to you about our Septums, now!" The nord mumbled and flashed a crazed glare at the dark elf, then excused the buying pair outside, dragging Lexic by the arm.

"What is it you want!?! I was on the cusp of getting forty septums off an ebony claymore!" Lexic felt disappointed of the opportunity he destroyed, but in his mind he felt this information was worth knowing to the nord.

“Look as much as I hate losing bargains, this needs to be known. That orc has four puncture wounds in his neck and blood running from them. He’s being enchanted by Vampires!” Lexic urged his message to Cyris, but the nord didn’t seem bothered by it.

“Look, whatever floats his boat. I’m sure they are some foxy ladies. Hell! They must be if he was forced to open late this morning.” The nord chuckled as he was pleased to hear the shopkeeper was getting some action, but the dark elf was still adamant this relationship wasn’t to be taken at face value.

“Incase you don’t know, in about eight days we have the Witches’ Festival, where figures of magic and religion clash in battle together. Vampires are the icon of dark magic and still thrive in these types of wars. By the Nine Divines and my ancestors if we don’t do something now, these Vampires could very well have our heads!” Cyris was starting to see the problem here, as the two of them were working under the priests of Talos, a forbidden God throughout Tamriel, they would be in severe danger from Vampires and their ilk.

“I agree, it is a catalyst for danger in there, but we can’t just walk upstairs and vanquish them. We need a distraction for the orc and prevent ourselves from being ambushed by their unknown numbers. How can we save our skin here?” Lexic wasn’t one for sparing lives, he found more use in a dead body than a unathletic ally. It wasn’t a secret the dark elf was studying the illegal field of Necromancy, and it worked in his favour in the past but whether it would work on the undead Vampires or not remained to be tested. But first, the orc should be dealt with.

“Kill the orc, torch the shop and wait for them to come rushing out. The place is built with wood anyway.” Cyris nodded in agreement. The swift nord whipped his hand out as a double helix of blue energy burst out and charged at the orc. Unaware of the incoming danger, the shopkeeper was picked up and slammed lethally against the stone wall behind him, knocking the torch overhead onto the hay bags below. Cyris smirked at his fool-proof plan.

“Two birds with one stone, now ready yourself elf. The undead wenches will start screaming soon.” Cyris said as he quickly pulled out the ebony claymore he failed to pay the orc for. Like a banshee from myth, wails of agony and pain echoed from the door of the shop as wisps appeared and contorted through the flames. The stench of flesh drowned the market district as members of the city began to form a barrier around the local block. Lexic needed to stop the hysteria before the guards came forward to arrest them for vandalism, so he slowly stepped forward and held his hands out.

“People of Imperium City and the Emperor’s Watch, no need to panic! We have the situation in control!” As he spoke, a burned corpse burst and flew through the door and slid across the stone courtyard, stopping by Lexic. A member of the watch burst through the crowd with seven guards behind him, their gladius swords ready as the commander spoke.

“In the name of the Emperor what is going on here!?” The commander’s eyes went hollow as he saw the burnt corpse sizzling on the courtyard, then ordered his guards to surround the duo. Lexic needed to act fast.

“No need to worry commander, we have this under control! Upon discovery of puncture wounds in the shopkeep’s neck, we deduced that he was indeed thrall’d by foxy Vampire women. In order to prevent the spread of their dark magic, we ended the thrall’s life and burnt their home while it’s daylight. We are doing this in the good nature of the Empire, please do not take any violent actions unless the Vampires survive!” The commander felt assured in a hesitant way by this incursion, so he began to usher away the citizens to their business and approached the flame-engulfed door with his shield and gladius ready.

“How long until it’s safe to go back in?” He asked, curious in what the vampires were doing inside the city. Cyris looked at the man and chuckled.

“Grab some water, kids, it’s going to get messy in there and we do want the other shops to remain open.” Siren bells rang in the commander’s mind as he saw the problem of spreading fire, then ran to the nearest well for some buckets. Cyris patted the dark elf and gave a satisfied look.

“Good job elf, you’ve just taken three years off our prison sentence. So what now?” Lexic looked around to see where the guards went, but only found resident shopkeepers using the buckets to dampen the fires. This was their moment.

“Now, we run and avoid any prison sentence.” The duo agreed and sprinted for the doors to the Palace District, they got away. This time.