

Fall of Angels - Chapters 9-11

By:

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Chapter Nine - Sable Slayer

She drifted between time, in nospace. Her mind ran from her obsidian end-cap, accenting the pommel, down the luminescent black diamond grip, and stopped at the cross-guard. The two bones forming the cross-guard fused around the rain guard and the double-fuller blade. The bones were from the first god she had killed. It had been a minor god, but it cemented her legend both in the minds of men, and in that of her peers.

She continued along the strong of the blade, the fuller giving way to the riser. There, at the transition, a flaw on the edge, before continuing to the point.

A thousand years she had fought alongside humans, even as she watched the corruption take form in their minds. Fewer and fewer were worthy to carry her and her sisters. Some of her kin no longer trusted men and began only allowing human women to wield them in battle. Legendary, the women warriors dotting human history.

Her last battle pitted Sable Slayer against one who would be god. The hand wielding her faltered, lacking the determination and fearlessness to counteract the brute force of the attacker's sword. A common sword at that, lacking a will, devoid of honor, but swung with the greed for power.

At the moment of impact, the man wielding Sable Slayer let go of her, leaving her momentarily weakened. The other blade chipped her edge, leaving a reminder humans were no longer worthy, could no longer to be trusted.

One of the last to do so, she left time and joined her many sisters in nospace. Each now relived the memories of ages past, when their glory counted for something. She was about to relive an epic battle when something reached out to her.

"I am Shadow. Will you join me in a battle?"

Chapter Ten - The Sentient Swords

Sable reached out, senses and awareness seeking to confront the intruder, but quickly scaled back the conduit. So much power; she was tempted to accept whatever the conflict. She wanted to feel that conviction fueling her, running through her core, cutting a swath through the enemy's lines.

No! She knew not what enemy, nor who would wield her. And yet, there was something familiar in the presence.

"You are part human."

"I don't know what I am. It may be a trace of what I once was yet remains; if so, it is but a shadow among shadows." Shadow's replied conveyed more than he intended. Sable wondered if he understood her relationship to things and humans.

"Some shadows are troubling," Sable replied. "I cannot fathom intent, and see little of its nature. I see human and

demon; the rest would have been called an abomination in different times and ancient places."

Sable cautiously took measure of the being. Much of what she saw burned with honor, integrity, focus, and other qualities which would make this Shadow a worthy wielder of her own will. But, the large part she could not see ... that gave her pause.

"Perhaps I am an abomination," Shadow replied, "but to humans, so are demons. So are Angels. And to some humans, humans I've gathered for this battle, so are gods."

As Shadow spoke, he let his thoughts spread in this nospace, reaching other swords listening to the interaction between him and Sable.

"Stand as you once did, alongside humans facing the light of Angels."

Shadow's words had barely finished echoing in their consciousness when a wave of anger swept through the now attentive swords. Shadow could sense thousands; as many as would be needed.

"Angels!" Sable voiced the disdain. "The corruptors! They altered human history, kept humans from their greatness. We would welcome the chance to fight alongside humans, to help them once more travel the paths of honor. But ... "

Shadow finished for her.

"... But, you cannot be sure if they are worthy."

As he spoke, Shadow spread his awareness, making available the memories of his recruitment efforts. Recruitment of thousands of humans spread through the continents, each prepared to face possible death with no promised reward other than a chance for freedom and of regaining control of their destiny.

"I can tell you this: they will meet the Angels with or without you. With you," he continued, now addressing the assemblage of sentient swords, "they stand a chance."

Sable spoke for many. "I do not question the motivation and worthiness of the humans you recruited. I aim to understand your motivation. What is your goal with taking on the Angels?"

Shadow paused. "The Angels are but a stepping stone to what lies beyond." His reply was clear.

"God." If Sable had been capable of speech, the word would have been a whisper.

"God." Shadow was capable of speech, but in nospace words were not voiced. Instead, the word appeared in the consciousness of the swords as chilling nothingness.

Chapter Eleven - The Bonding

Joe looked at the sword standing on point in the middle of his den. When it had first appeared, the sword stood nearly as tall as he. Now it was barely the length of his arm. Much thinner, too. It made it easier to conceal, but not much.

When he had first touched it, a link had formed. A link to someone or something named Lion Claw.

"You can call me Lena if you prefer."

"What?!" Joe jumped at the words forming in his mind. Unnerving it was, having an immobile object in his mind.

"You've seen angels and demons, and a sentient sword startles you?"

Joe stared at the sword.

"To be fair, the angels and demons startle me as well." He could have 'thought' the reply, but he felt more comfortable speaking.

"I'm just trying to figure out how I'm going to carry you."

"I could carry myself, but that might be a bit conspicuous."

"Point taken." Joe thought for a moment. "How do you move about? For that matter, how do you hover like that?"

"I use The Force, Joe. A rock is no different than a spaceship. All are affected by The Force. It binds us all!"

"What?"

"Ah, so we reached a limit of belief. Sentient swords, angels, and demons: yes. The Force: no," Lena replied.

"Good choice," she continued. "That's all bullcrap, you know. Were there such a thing, none of the Jedi would need to leave their sofas. They could just will stuff all over the universe."

"You pulled that from my memory. The discussion with my friends at the comics convention." Joe thought for a moment.

"Are you aping my argument, or is that your own opinion?"

"Aping. Such a derogatory assumption and insulting visual, as well."

"Er ... I didn't ... I mean, I wasn't ... "

"Relax," Lena interrupted, "I'm just having some fun. But, there is one thing I pulled from that mess that might be of practical value. You might have noticed I am smaller. I can put most of me back into nospace, and leave only the hilt here until you need me. Then I can come back. Lightsaber, I believe you call it. I could work like that."

For the first time in many months, Joe's face beamed.

"Really?!? That would be so ... " he caught himself before gushing out some idiotic and arcane expression. Instead, he finished with "... convenient."

"Men!"

Joe thoughts drifted to something nagging at him. Before he asked, Lena answered.

"Angels have no sway on me. As long as you don't panic, and trust in me, trust in our bond, I can shield you from their light. Depending on the levels of your conviction, courage, and confidence, we could even do some damage. We have no hope of destroying one; I can shield light and can even bend some of it, but only Shadow can destroy angels. We can, however, keep it from messing with others."

"Why are you doing this?" This time Joe's words came out before he could think of them.

"We were forged a long time ago, or perhaps a time hence, with one purpose."

"A purpose?" Joe interrupted without meaning to.

"Yes, a purpose ... to bound to other beings, to no longer be alone."

Joe sat silent. He thought of his life, the many ups and downs, the moments of incredible joy, and the moments of unbearable pain. All but his last unbearable pain had been shared with someone and the loss of that someone had left him lost. Lost to the world, and lost to himself.

The thought came unbidden to his mind; it is good to no longer be alone.

"Thank you for understanding. Now, how about some basic sword fighting lessons?"