**Rebel Revolt Revival**

**Celtic and his party were continuing their trek to Delgunner Kingdom. They were heading toward the location of where the Axe Hero, Eric, had been previously. Viola was leading the way, holding a map, while the rest of the party followed. They were in a somewhat rocky area, though there was plenty of greenery and plant life around. Celtic was dreading what they were going to find.**

**“So…” he sighed. “What do we know about this latest problem that Mr. Axe-to-Grind: Eric, has done?”**

**Viola turned to him, “I don’t know the whole story. All I know is that he helped some sort of rebellion. However, I’m not sure which side he was on, as, from what I’ve heard, the rebellion was a failure. It makes me worried that he may have been assisting in *stopping* the rebellion instead of possibly *helping* it. The only other bit of info I know is that some sort of high-ranking general is involved in this situation, making me worried that this general is a villain who is oppressing the people. We’ll see soon enough.”**

**Skye then noticed something, “Hold on, gang! There’s a man lying on the ground just up ahead! He might be hurt!”**

**They looked ahead to see the upper body of a man lying face-first on the ground, his lower body concealed by shrubbery. Nodding, the party scampered over to the man. His body was bulky and broad, with well-defined muscles, short, unkempt mud brown hair, somewhat tan skin, and short, pointed ears. He was dressed in a vest over a bare chest, shoulder plates, and fingerless gloves. Next to him were a pair of large morning stars. His body was riddled with wounds.**

**“Viola, work your magic,” Celtic instructed.**

**Nodding, Viola started to channel magical energy between her clawed hands before stating, “Restore!”**

**Light and sparkles bathed the man in healing energy, causing his wounds to close. This seemed to also stir him from his downed state, as he grunted and groaned, slowly lifting his head up, eyes opening weakly, taking a minute to regain his focus.**

**“W…Who are you?” he asked, clearly exhausted.**

**“We’re the Shroud Hero’s party,” Rupert explained. “We had heard that Eric, the Axe Hero, was here recently, but caused some sort of problem. We’re here to fix whatever problem he created.”**

**It took a moment for this to register in the man’s mind before his eyes widened, “Wait. You’re here to fix the damage that the Axe Hero caused?! And you’re the Shroud Hero to boot?! Maybe our luck is changing after all. Yes, that idiot Axe Hero caused an entire village to become enslaved to a wicked and vile general because he only listed to *his* side of the story. I was part of that village, as it’s a place for outsiders like myself, but after that moron crushed our rebellion, I fled in hopes of finding someone who could help us regain our freedom. However, as you saw, I was injured during my escape, and since I lack any knowledge on medicine or healing magic, I was left in a pretty bad state. I finally collapsed here, completely exhausted. I take it you healed me as well?”**

**“You can thank Viola for that,” Skye stated. “She may be an Arachne, but she’s a very talented healer. I’d say she’s on-par with Templar Knights in terms of pure healing magic prowess and knowledge on medicine and potions.”**

**The man nodded, “Thank you, you have my deepest gratitude. But we must act quickly, as I managed to get some very grim information before I fled. The general is not human, apparently. I don’t know what he is, but he’s disguised himself as a human in order to take advantage of the situation. From what I’ve heard, he plans on eating the enslaved women and children on the night of the Double Blood Eclipse.”**

**Celtic quirked an eyebrow, “Double Blood Eclipse?”**

**Skye turned to him, “It’s a once-a-month event where the two moons become red and the smaller one eclipses the bigger one. This event causes multiple species of beings to be affected by it in various degrees. Canine beastmen, for example, go into heat, certain monsters become more aggressive, and certain species of demon become more active.”**

**Celtic gained a nervous expression, “What species of demon are we talking about?”**

**“Only Low-Tier demons, Celtic,” Viola explained. “Ones like Red Demons, Blue Demons, Moth Demons, Bat Demons, and Ashfang Demons, as they’re more susceptible to the moon’s energies than higher-ranked ones like Shadokor. As a result, they’re not big threats, even under the Double Blood Eclipse’s energies. Moth and Bat Demons in particular tend to respond to the Double Blood Eclipse the most, as it often causes violent feeding urges. Which means, if that general is planning on eating the women and children on the Double Blood Eclipse, then he may be a Moth or Bat Demon in disguise.”**

**“How long do we have until the Double Blood Eclipse?”**

**“We have three days,” the man replied. “The Double Blood Eclipse is three nights from now. Which means we have to take that general down soon, before his true nature is revealed and he feasts upon the women and children.”**

**“At least that gives us some time,” Rupert said. “How far are we from where the general is?”**

**“If we get going now we can make it there by nightfall,” the man said. “I can guide you to the location, as I know where it is.”**

**“Fine, but you need a quick pick-me-up, as you said you’re pretty tired,” Celtic stated. “Viola, got anything that’ll jump-start him?”**

**Viola was rummaging through her backpack, “Give me a moment, as I know I have some Fuka Berry potions in here. That’ll get him back on his feet easily. Now, where is… A-ha! Found one.” She then handed over a vial of bluish liquid to the man, “Drink this. It’ll give you the energy boost you need.”**

**The man graciously took it, “Thank you. Bottoms up.”**

**He drank the liquid in one gulp, causing several sparkles to form around him, along with a glowing aura appearing briefly. After a moment, he returned the vial.**

**“Thanks. That did the trick. Oh, and by the way, my name is Tyroe. Now, let’s hurry before we lose any more time.”**

**However, as he emerged from the bushes, it revealed that his lower body was that of a brownish-grey snake, startling the group.**

**“You’re a Naga!?” Rupert sputtered.**

**Tyroe gained a sheepish expression, “Yeah, sorry about that. I know that Nagas aren’t exactly popular, primarily due to our… eating habits, but I mean no harm. Unlike other Nagas, who prey upon people as often as animals, I don’t do that. I’m more of the gentle giant type, hence why I was living in a place full of outcasts, as my own kind don’t want me around. That doesn’t mean I can’t fight, but I prefer to bask in a field of flowers over fighting. However, I will fight if I have to or if the cause is right. You can trust me, as I promise I won’t lead you astray.”**

**The group turned to Celtic, who sighed, “We’re gonna have to trust him. He clearly wants to help, as we did come all this way to clean up Eric’s mess, so we might as well accept his help, as he knows more about the situation than we do. We need every advantage we can get, so we can’t be picky about where our help comes from. Let’s go, as time is of the essence. Tyroe, lead the way.”**

**Tyroe smiled, “Thank you, noble Shroud Hero. We must hurry, as even though we have three nights before the Double Blood Eclipse, we have to get rid of that general before it’s too late. Follow me.”**

**The party followed Tyroe to their destination. By the time they reached it, night had fallen. Keeping a low profile, the group slinked around the sentries that were watching over the enslaved village. Having arrived at the back of the village, Tyroe moved a boulder, displaying tremendous strength, revealing a hidden tunnel.**

**“As I’m an Earth Naga,” he said in a hushed voice. “I can manipulate anything made of earth or rock. I used that power to make this tunnel. The villagers know about it, but they couldn’t follow because I had to close it up in order to conceal my escape. They know I would return if I found help, so they stayed put. Now, follow me, but keep quiet.”**

**The party followed Tyroe into the tunnel. Even Viola was able to fit safely inside it despite her large size. After a few minutes, they came to a blockade. Using magic, Tyroe gently moved the blockade away, before poking his head up from the hole. He then noticed some of the enslaved villagers, giving them a hiss to catch their attention.**

**“Tyroe!” one man said in an eager, but hushed voice.**

**“You’ve returned!” another said.**

**Tyroe put a finger at his lips, “Shhh… keep it down. Yes, I’ve returned, and I’ve brought help. Help in the form of the Shroud Hero. Unlike the Axe Hero, the Shroud Hero is on our side, as he came here to fix the Axe Hero’s mess. Now, is the coast clear for us to emerge?”**

**The villagers looked around before one replied, “Yes, it’s safe to come out.”**

**Nodding, Tyroe slithered his way out, followed by Celtic, Skye, Rupert, and Viola, stunning the villagers at the unusual assortment of party members.**

**A man approached them, “Are you really the Shroud Hero? And are you really here to save us?”**

**Celtic nodded, “Yes. I’m Celtic Pulsar, the Shroud Hero. These are my party members: Skye the Light Elf, Rupert the Beastman, and Viola the Arachne. Viola had informed me a little while ago that the Axe Hero had done something stupid, so we’ve come to correct that. And, for the record, he’s not the only Hero to have screwed up. The Sword, Spear, and Bow Heroes have all done some incredibly stupid stuff that we’ve had to clean up, so it’s safe to say they’re more like hazards than help at this point. But, in any case, what’s the situation?”**

**Another man approached, “The Axe Hero helped that evil general crush our rebellion. Now, we men me toil in the mines, harvesting anything of value, while the women and children are locked up in that large estate on the hill, outside of the village. We don’t know what he plans to do with them, but we dread it.”**

**Skye stated, “We heard from Tyroe that he plans to eat them during the Double Blood Eclipse, which causes us to suspect that he’s some sort of lesser demon or something in disguise. We plan to stop that and kill him before he can do that. We plan to attack him ASAP, as we only have two more nights before the Double Blood Eclipse, so we want to nip it in the bud.”**

**“He plans to EAT our women and children!?” one man sputtered. “We have to do something, fast!”**

**“Keep it down!” Viola hissed. “That’s exactly why we’re here. Celtic, any ideas?”**

**Celtic took a moment to ponder before replying, “We’re going to have to rely on stealth this time. We can’t run the risk of civilians getting hurt or killed, so we can’t use them to stage another rebellion. But, at the same time, doing so would cause a distraction that would divert the soldiers’ attention away. Hmm… Viola, do you think you can lay out some traps like you did with Lucas and his party? That way, we can use a rebellion to act as a diversion while making sure that the civilians don’t get hurt by trapping the soldiers in webs or other such traps. That would allow us to enter the mansion and take down the general while his men are distracted.”**

**Viola took a moment to observe the surroundings before gaining a smile, “Yeah, I think I can lay out a few traps that’ll ensnare those pests. Spiders are nature’s best trappers, so I think I can get a few traps set up within a short amount of time to keep those soldiers from hurting the villagers.”**

**Tyroe then slithered up, “I can also create pitfall traps by manipulating the earth, as well as sinkholes and quicksand-like traps, too. So, I can help in that regard as well.”**

**Celtic nodded, “Good. Let’s map out our plan before we go on the offensive. That way we can get the groundwork ready beforehand. Do you villagers have a map of the surrounding area?”**

**A man nodded, “Yes, we do.”**

**“Get one of them, so we can see exactly what kind of landscape we have to work with. It’ll also help us map out where we’re gonna put our traps. But hurry, as time is of the essence.”**

**Within the hour the plan was set. Viola and Tyroe had laid out their various traps for the rogue soldiers while the male villagers prepared for their rebellion. Celtic and the others reviewed the plan one more time to ensure that everything was ready. By the time everything was set, it was midnight, with the clouds covering the two moons, which were starting to turn red. Then, it happened.**

**Blasts erupted within the area, causing the soldiers to panic, while the villagers began their retaliation. The soldiers hastily gathered up their equipment and prepared to counterattack, only to have the various traps that Viola and Tyroe laid out activate, leaving them at the mercy of the villagers. This also caused the guards from the mansion to charge out, leaving the building understaffed, allowing Celtic and his party to enter it virtually unopposed. There were still some guards left, but they were easily subdued by the more powerful and higher leveled team, with Viola encasing them in silk to further prevent any interference.**

**“Follow me!” Tyroe stated. “I know where the general spends the night in this mansion. He’s on the top floor in the luxury suite.”**

**“Fine, lead the way,” Celtic nodded.**

**The group charged up three flights of stairs before coming to their destination. However, the general was out of bed and standing before them in the hallway. He was a handsome man with sharp features, short black hair, a lithe build, and green eyes. He looked livid at the disruption.**

**“So, you’re the annoying pests that are causing such a ruckus,” he growled. “You have some nerve. Hmm?” he then noticed the Shroud, “So, you’re one of those Legendary Heroes, are you? The Shroud Hero I take it? Your buffoonish Axe Hero ally made my job so much easier. And now, I will eliminate you so I can enjoy my feast on the Double Blood Eclipse.”**

**Everyone drew their weapons, with Celtic growling, “Try us. Now reveal your true self, as we know you’re not human.”**

**“Very well,” the general said. “This form was starting to cramp my wings anyway. Might as well give them a stretch before I feast.”**

**He then transformed. His jacket turned into four moth wings with eye patterns, two fuzzy antenna emerged from his head, his pupils became slits, his teeth became fangs, and his hands became claws.**

**“A Moth Demon!” Skye stated.**

**“Yes!” the Moth Demon sneered. “Prepare to meet your death!”**

**He charged in, flying quickly, causing the gang to scatter. Celtic had transformed his hand into Gatling and started to fire, trying to hit him, but he was fast enough to dodge the energy bullets. Skye and Rupert nodded before summoning magical energy.**

**“Typhoon!” Skye stated.**

**“Zap Bolt!” Rupert roared.**

**A mighty typhoon formed in the hall, followed by electrical energy raging around them. The two attacks combined, creating an electrified typhoon. The Wind and Lighting energy whips lashed out in all directions, striking everything around them. This forced the Moth Demon to try to dodge the attack, but as he moved, the energy whips struck him. This caused him to be flung forward right into another energy whip, causing the cycle to repeat as he was bashed around by the combination attack. After the attack ceased, he looked livid.**

**“You’ll pay for that!” he growled. “Airstream!”**

**He created a massive tornado of wind from his wings that barreled toward the party. Tyroe jumped in front, eyes glaring.**

**“Not happening, bug breath! Stone Body!” he stated.**

**His body became a greyish color, indicating he had become stone. The Airstream attack slammed into him but was effortlessly dispersed by Tyroe’s newly hardened body. Viola took the opportunity to hurl her scythe like a boomerang at the Moth Demon. He was unable to dodge the attack in time, the scythe slicing off one of his wings, grounding him, before the scythe returned to its owner. Celtic then jumped in, his arm having transformed into a new weapon. This one looked like a narrow rectangular cannon with several vents on the side. He aimed it at the downed Moth Demon.**

**“Time to feel the burn! Heat Cannon!” he roared.**

**The vents released bursts of energy in a sequence before the nozzle of the cannon released a powerful flame energy. The Moth Demon could only watch in horror as the flamethrower-like energy engulfed him, setting him ablaze. He flailed around in panic as his body was burning, but before long the fire energy reduced him to ash, bones and all, leaving behind the severed wing. The gang exchanged high-fives while Celtic transformed his arm back to normal and walked over to the wing. He picked it up and had the Shroud absorb it, creating a new Shroud form that read “Moth Wing Shroud”.**

**“Moth Wing Shroud, huh?” he said to himself. He then turned to the group, “We still have some work to do. We need to free the captive women and children and reunite them with their families. Tyroe, since they know you, you take Viola and Rupert and set them free. Skye and I will head outside to see how things are going for the villagers. Meet us outside.”**

**“Right!” they said in unison.**

**As Tyroe led Viola and Rupert down into the dungeon, Celtic and Skye went outside. They were greeted by the villagers, who were bloody and battered, but largely unhurt. One ran up to them.**

**“Were you successful?” he asked.**

**Skye gave him a thumbs-up, “Not to worry. We roasted that Moth Demon to ashes, and Tyroe and the others are rescuing the women and children as we speak. You’ll be seeing your loved ones shortly. What about the soldiers? And were there any casualties among you?”**

**A man smiled, “We took care of those tin tyrants. Thanks to all those traps, they were at our mercy, and we weren’t feeling rather merciful today. And we didn’t suffer a single casualty thanks to your plan and those traps. You’re a much better hero than the Axe Hero, to say the least. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”**

**Just then Tyroe and the others emerged, along with the women and children, none worse for the wear. The respective families quickly reunited, hugging and crying into each other, clearly happy about being free. Celtic and his party spent the rest of the night in the mansion, and on the following morning the women prepared them a breakfast feast. Celtic and his team collected various items from the manor as payment for their services, since they knew the villagers’ funds had been squeezed dry by the Moth Demon, much to the villagers’ gratitude. However, as they were about to leave, Tyroe slithered up to them.**

**“Shroud Hero, sir?” he said in a nervous tone.**

**“Yes?” Celtic asked.**

**“Would it be okay if I joined you? I was highly impressed by you and your party’s skill and strategic prowess. Because of you, we took back everything within a single night. I know that Infinator is rising, so I know that he’ll be making his next move soon, and I want to help fight him off. Please, will you allow me to join your party? Besides, I’ve got a bone to pick with the Axe Hero for this screw-up of his. But, please, will you let me join you?”**

**Skye turned to Celtic, “I think it’s a good idea, Cel. Tyroe possesses the rare Earth element, and we could use someone as strong as him on the team. How about it?”**

**Celtic took a moment to think before replying, “Fine, I accept. We could use a strongman and having the Earth element would be beneficial. Fine, welcome to the party. Place your hand on the Shroud’s gem and I’ll register you as a new party member.”**

**Smiling, Tyroe placed a hand on the Shroud’s gem.**

**“Add Party Member,” Celtic said strongly.**

**The gem glowed, causing a new set of stats to appear in Celtic’s status screen vision, reading “Tyroe Sidewind” along with “Level 28” appearing next to it. He gave Tyroe a nod, making him retract his hand. Tyroe then gave a polite bow.**

**“Thank you, Shroud Hero, I appreciate it,” he said with a smile.**

**“You can just call me Celtic. Now, we better get moving. We’re heading to Delgunner Kingdom to clear my name from the Light Elves’ latest scheme, and we still have a ways to go.”**

**Tyroe nodded, “Let’s go then! To Delgunner!”**

**With a final nod the party resumed their quest to Delgunner, with a new friend in tow.**

**Next Chapter: *Knight of Templar***