

“When you said you had an unorthodox idea, I didn’t expect this.” Harry said, keeping his eyes open at the clearing ahead from the top of a tree.

“If you want a strong and trained army to fight against the muggles, then the Goblin army is the better choice.” said Rowena.

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to involve the Goblins. They won’t be interested in fighting under my command after what I did to their army.”

“That’s where you are wrong. Goblins respect two things: wealth and power. You’ve proven yourself capable and powerful by decimating their army. You stand to become wealthy after you’ve crowned yourself king of all Scotland.”

“I don’t think we’ve decided on that.” Harry shook his head.

“Well, I have, and so have the people of Hogsmead. These lands have never had a king of magical blood. You’ve managed to unite more people and conquer more lands than any wizard had done in living memory. You’re the king of Scots in all but name. The students have even started to call you dragon king.”

“Monarchies are an unstable form of governance. Look at the muggles. They kill each other in droves because some idiot tells them to.” said Harry with a derisive snort.

“Then create another form of government. Maybe use the governance model of Valyria in this new polity you’re creating.” Rowena suggested, forcing Harry into silence.

“That is not as easy as it looks. A ruling council must have a shared vision and the resolve to set aside their personal differences to achieve the common good. That’s a difficult balance to achieve most of the time.”

“Then I suggest you crown yourself as king but also create this ruling council in the model of Valyria. You could keep the council in check while the council could keep your power in check. The system of checks and balances could form out of these two pillars of power in the kingdom.” Rowena suggested.

Harry gave the suggestion some serious thought.

He was not ignorant of the fact that a new kingdom in Scotland that works as a sanctuary for pagan culture and magical communities could become a target in the long run. Under such threats, a singular leadership that could make quick decisions to mobilise resources and armies to defend the nation and withstand the test of time was necessary. Under the current geopolitical scenario, the best form of government to preserve the new Scotland would be a kingdom where a king and a wizengamot could share power. He could see that such a dual form of government could offer long-term political stability and equip the kingdom to face the challenges ahead.

Maybe Scotland could expand its borders and kick out Rome’s influence in its entirety from the British Isles. A new kind of power could rise on the European continent, and that could change the world forever. For ill or for good, only time could tell, and Harry was the least bit bothered by such speculations.

“Are you interested in making me king so you can become the queen?” Harry teased.

“So, you’ve considered making me your queen.” Rowena turned the tables on him expertly.

“Hmm... I’ll give it some serious thought if your idea pans out. After all, a queen must be witty, cunning, merciful and wise.” Harry said sagely.

Movement in the clearing attracted their attention. Harry saw a small delegation of goblins in the distance carrying a white flag of truce.

“Looks like they seem to be in a talking mood.” Harry muttered.

“Snipshank is far more reasonable than his predecessor. But I suggest we stick to the matter and avoid bringing up the battle.” Rowena advised.

“All right.” Harry said before taking her hand in his.

Harry assumed his spirit form and allowed it to encompass it over Rowena. Together, they surged upward into the blue sky, leaving sparkling grey smoke in their wake.

They fell from the sky and hovered above the ground before reforming their physical body a few feet from the goblins. Harry took in the armour-clad goblins while maintaining a firm grip on his wand.

“Lady Ravenclaw. Lord Targaryen.”

“King Snipshank.”

Harry observed the crowned goblin king. Like all typical goblins, this one sported the standard pointed teeth and a crooked nose. But he couldn’t make out the rest of the physical features of the head as they wore steel helmets save for their slanted eyes. All four goblins in the delegation were barely three feet tall, and he was being generous with their heights. But these goblins were clearly warriors, or at least they worked out because their physical characteristics spoke of their martial culture. Their bodies were stocky and filled with muscles.

He supposed their wicked-looking axes and hammers were not for show.

“You asked for a meeting, Lady Ravenclaw. Say your piece.”

“Our peoples have warred for centuries, spilling magical blood. But what if we can come together as allies against a common enemy.”

“You speak of the muggles?” Snipshank asked coldly.

“Yes. Together we could...” Rowena started but was cut off.

“You want us to fight your battles.”

“No. Not at all, King Snipshank. We hope to reclaim these lands from the muggles and establish a kingdom of wizards. But there is so much land under muggle control. We could divide the lands claimed equally between our people upon victory.” Rowena offered.

Harry only kept an ear out for the conversation between Rowena and the goblin king. His true focus, however, was on the guards of Snipshank.

More specifically, their minds and the secrets they hid in their wicked little minds. When he finished skimming through the surface thoughts of the goblins, Harry knew what he had to do.

“You think too highly of your people’s capability.” Harry said coolly while looking down on the goblin king.

“What!” Snipshank snarled at the insult to his people.

“Hadrian, what’re you doing?” Rowena asked worriedly.

“I can’t see any other reason why you’d think having some weak fools of your kind hide away like rats under the ground and hope to entrap us with your weak juvenile magic.” Harry said with a snort.

“What? How...?” Snipshank spluttered before his brain finally realised the gravity of the situation. “Attack!”

“Yeah right.” Harry snorted before using the blasting curse on the ground.

The goblin delegation was blasted away by the explosion while Harry placed a shield around himself and Rowena from the debris.

“Rowena. Will you keep these fools bound for a moment? I’ve got some pests to kill.”

“It’ll be my pleasure.” said Rowena before channelling magic through her stave and binding the goblin king and his guards under the hold of a stone golem.

Harry walked a few paces away from Rowena and touched the tip of his wand on the ground. He dipped into the magic in his body and connected it with the magic in the natural world. Keeping a clear picture of what he wanted in his mind, Harry began uttering a spell in parseltongue.

The ground underneath him shook as the enchantment took effect. The tremors on the ground stopped, but a radical change happened. The greenery that surrounded the clearing vanished instantly, and in its place, there was smooth white marble from one edge of the forest to the other.

“That should do it.” Harry nodded to himself before standing up from his crouch.

“What did you do, wizard?” Snipshank snarled.

“I transmuted the all the land a few feet down into marble. Yes, I turned this land into a tomb of your precious warlocks.” Harry said coldly.

“No!” Snipshank looked at the white marble in horror.

“Yes! Your people are now taking their last breath of air in a dark place where they can’t see or move. They’ll scream at the top of their lungs, but no one will hear them. They’ll call out to their king and wonder why they’re abandoned. They’ll reach out with their magic to feel a bit of hope that’s never there.” said Harry, bending a knee so that he was level with the trapped goblin king.

“Instead, they’ll die blind, deaf, and dumb when they should’ve been enjoying their life in a land ruled by those gifted with magic. All because little Snipshank thought he could destroy what I’m about to start.”

“We offered you peace and an alliance. Why would you reject it?” Rowena asked, staring at Snipshank with a disappointed look.

“Because he’d like to live in a world where the wizards are nothing rather than something.” said Harry.

“Your kind is an abomination – a mistake! You should’ve never existed. You are wrong!” Snipshank snapped.

“I see. Then let me tell you a little secret, goblin. I will build the most beautiful castle the world has ever seen in this place, atop the tomb of your people. I will build a throne fit for myself and my descendants here, and your kind will call me king, as will the wizards, the muggles and every other

creature that breathes in these lands.” Harry claimed while glaring into the slanted eyes of the goblin king.

“You are delusional! No goblin worth their name would call you king.” Snipshank yelled, straining against the restraints.

“That’s where you are wrong,” Harry smirked before standing to his full height while pointing his wand at the goblin. “You will be the first to do so.”

“Imperio.”

The goblin army was barely two thousand strong. But numbers didn’t bother Harry that much. He was expecting such a low number, especially after some mutinies.

As expected, Snipshank’s ‘decision’ to join the wizards in the battle against the muggles was unpopular. Harry had hung back and watched as some goblins mutinied and fled Snipshank in protest when he declared his intentions to fight the muggles.

Of course, Harry could never allow a breakaway goblin army to crop up a new goblin kingdom in his lands. Therefore, he had to wipe out all deserters of Snipshank’s army without any mercy. It was cruel and not gentlemanly, but Harry had no intention of getting bogged down in a cycle of war against different breakaway groups of goblins for the rest of his life. He already had the massive hostile muggle populace of the islands to contend with.

After securing the aid of Snipshank and his army, Harry returned to the villages under his control with the goblin army in tow. As expected, the muggles could not locate the exact position of the settlements because of the muggle-repelling wards he erected. But that doesn’t mean the muggles were not making the lives of the villagers any more difficult.

King Constantine had sent an army of 700 men strong to reclaim the villages. They patrolled the roads to other parts of the kingdom, forcing Harry to suspend all trade with the outside world. The only reason they had survived so far was because Hogsmeade and Hogwarts were keeping them supplied with all the essentials and traded for valuable commodities.

“They’ve blocked all the major trade routes to our villages. While Constantine’s men have not found the villages, they’re keeping watch on the roads.” Keith explained, pointing at several roads on the map laid bare on the table.

Harry didn’t say anything and merely observed the enemy positions on the map. It looked like the muggles were slowly surrounding the lands close to Hogwarts. The muggle-repelling wards kept Constantine’s army miles away from any of the villages under Harry’s control or Hogwarts. But having the war drag on for too long was not smart.

Besides, Constantine was not the only king who posed a threat to magical beings in the British Isles, nor were the many kings the sole threat.

“We need to attack these three villages where the army is concentrated simultaneously.” Pelius pointed to three villages on the map where their scouts claimed to have seen more soldiers.

"It won't be easy to dislodge Constantine's army and secure the village from..." Keith started, but Harry cut in.

"We won't be needing these three villages intact." Harry said before turning his sights on the silent goblin king in the room.

"Snipshanks. It's time for the goblins to enter the field."

The goblin king nodded before leaving the room silently.

"But my lord. The goblins – they'll show no mercy." Keith said worriedly.

"Good. We need Constantine to take our threat seriously. Once word spreads of the battle, he'll be forced to gather a large army and perhaps even lead it against us. We'll save ourselves months of war if we're lucky." said Harry before calling the meeting to a close.

The goblin army was brutal in its attack against the three villages and spared nothing after the battle. They killed anything that moved in the villages and left nothing to stand after the soldiers were killed off. After looting anything of value from the villages, everything was set on fire. Harry watched dispassionately as screams tore through the battlefield as the goblins ransacked the villages.

He had left the goblins to conduct warfare on their own terms to take the pressure off Snipshanks. Even if Harry had the goblin king under the Imperius curse, the rest of the goblins were hardly impressed by their king's decision to join the wizards to war against muggles. Having the goblins thrown into battles kept them from rebelling against the current arrangement. He needed their cooperation until Constantine was defeated and Scotland was liberated from muggle rule. Harry was confident he could make some inroads into the goblin community within that timeframe. Harry was hoping to take advantage of their greed for power and wealth in the coming days.

Harry walked through the burnt remains of one of the villages after the fighting subsided. The goblins had torched everything to the ground, and Harry had to use the bubble head charm to avoid the smoke. Half-burnt bodies were strewn across the streets, which gave Harry the urge to throw up. Despite that, he braved the streets as he owed it to himself to see the aftermath of his decision.

So far, his war had always been with minimal war crimes and deaths. Keeping the muggles alive had been one of his prime concerns as he found value in their lives, and he knew muggles could contribute immensely to the benefit of the kingdom he was building. But this time, he had allowed wanton destruction and indiscriminate killing to unfold, and he needed to see it with his own eyes to ensure that he learned the actual cost of war of this scale.

He walked the length of the destroyed village for nearly an hour before returning to the camp set outside, where the goblins held a few prisoners.

Harry found the prisoners shivering in fright, surrounded by goblins armed to the teeth. Before the battle, Harry had asked the goblins to capture the priests from the church, and thankfully, they followed through with that order.

"I have a message for your king, priest." Harry said while coldly staring down at the priest.

"What do you want, monster?" the priest stuttered out after gathering some courage.

"Imperio."

Harry returned to Hogwarts to oversee the dragon dung being transported out to the fields under his control. He also had a few things to set up in Hogsmeade, like recruiting a lot of builders to start building his castle. The workforce that built a massive castle like Hogwarts was a sure bet in raising his grand new castle. Therefore, he made sure to recruit some of the best builders he knew for the castle. He also had plans to build a new city around the castle in time, which required some advanced planning and space allocation. There was also the need to discuss the finer points of what a new Kingdom of Scotland would look like with the Founders.

It was also a convenient excuse to spend some time with Rowena during her free hours.

“So, you want to create a council of wizards and witches mimicking the one you told us about in the Valyrian Freehold?” Helena asked with a pensive look.

“Hmm. Something like that. I call it the Wizengamot.” Harry said with a bright smile, earnestly looking at the Founders for their opinion.

“Where will you find worthy wizards to fill this Wizengamot, and what powers does it have?” Slytherin questioned.

“I have four worthy wizards before me now. The rest will be picked to represent a specific locality within the kingdom. As for powers, I envision the Wizengamot becoming the chamber where new laws are proposed, discussed and voted on.” Harry explained.

“I’m sorry, Hadrian. We cannot join the Wizengamot. It’ll interfere with our work in Hogwarts.” said Godric, shaking his head.

“What? Don’t be ridiculous. You are some of the best healers, potion masters, battle mages and enchanters. To top it all off, you are educators. Your voice must be heard in the Wizengamot.”

“I think our voice is aptly represented, Hadrian.” said Godric, nodding at Rowena.

“Of course, Rowena’s opinions and advice are highly valued and taken into consideration. But I require people with wisdom and differing opinions in the Wizengamot for it to function productively.” Harry argued, but it was for naught.

All four Founders were adamant to keep themselves away from a seat in the Wizengamot despite Harry’s repeated attempts to influence them. He even offered to create a law that’d ensure Hogwarts would remain an independent entity without any interference from the state. But even that refused to make them change their opinion. He went a few steps back and even offered a seat for a representative of Hogwarts, but even that got rejected.

Harry was flummoxed when Salazar Slytherin, a man who was famed for looking for traits like ambition and cunning in his students, was the most adamant in rejecting any position of power in the Wizengamot for Hogwarts or the Founders in their individual capacity. But he managed to extract a promise from the Founders that they’d join the Wizengamot when they stopped working in Hogwarts. He had no intention of leaving the Founders out of the Wizengamot. He was confident he could convince them to join the governing body in time.

Harry spent most of the next two weeks in Hogsmeade. If he was not overseeing the construction of his castle, he was training with the Red Queen. Riding a dragon was far different, and Harry was

intent on using the dragon in the war. As Rowena pointed out, he was the only wizard to have bonded with a dragon, and he wanted to milk it for all it was worth.

His wait, however, came to an end when Harry got word from his spies.

“My lord. We got word from our spies. King Constantine has called all his banners. He has started gathering his full army like you wanted.” Pelius reported.

Harry was immediately on his feet, feeling satisfaction at his plan having its intended effect. He had sent the corpses from the goblin attack to Constantine with imperiused priests to spread every gruesome detail of the attack. The priests under his control were also ordered to stir up religious fervour to force Constantine’s hand. By the looks of it, his plan worked like a charm, forcing the muggle king to commit most of his forces in a decisive battle.

It’d have been hell to fight all his opponents spread out in the kingdom, and by Constantine calling all his banners, Harry got the opportunity to destroy and capture the muggle army. It was now time to put an end to the Kingdom of Alba.

“Very good. Let’s begin.”