

DECEIVER IN DISTRESS

An RPG main-quest cinematic

Written by

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PRECEDING GAMEPLAY: AGREE TO RECOVER THE DAUGHTER OF HOUSE LEOL.

The player character is ARRYN (25), a ranger from a displaced people known as the CLASPERS (or, derogatorily, the GRASPERS).

She has agreed to aid HIGH HOUSE LEOL by recovering their daughter ELUNE (28) from rival faction LINE FARRE's custody, to secure their support for her people. This is one path, following an earlier branching choice where the player has sided with HOUSE LEOL instead of LINE FARRE.

ARRYN has broken into the FARRE ESTATE unseen and searched it thoroughly, discovering that ELUNE is not in a 'prison', but a lavish boudoir...

INT. HOUSE LEOL ESTATE BOUDOIR - NIGHT

ARRYN (25) clicks open the door, pops her head around it to quickly scan the room, and almost exits again before at last spotting ELUNE (28). Elune is reading, ostentatiously bored, in a plush chair.

ARRYN

You're... here? They're keeping you here?

Elune snaps out of her reading and tosses her book aside carelessly. She stands, regal in her posture and the tilt of her tressed head.

ELUNE

Oh, darling, I know. Isn't it quaint?

ARRYN

Quaint? It's a palace.

ELUNE

Ha! Hardly. But, oh, look at the state of you, ragged little pup.

ARRYN

I've looked everywhere for you. The basement, stables, the butchery-

ELUNE

Oh darling, really? Why ever would you trouble yourself with all that?

ARRYN

Are you serious? You're a prisoner.

ELUNE

Tut. A prisoner, indeed.

ARRYN

So you're not? You're just here, at your enemy's house, reading for... what? Fun?

ELUNE

Oh, love. What a diverting little play they've put on for you. Pity those eager eyes of yours didn't see through the props and swaps.

ARRYN

Speaking of theatre...

Arryn's eyes skate over Elune's conspicuously tailored ensemble.

ELUNE

Oh, I know! Don't I look just the perfect vagabond? I'm already dressed for you, ready for our little moonlight flit! I won't be slung over your horse, mind. You'll need to fetch my own.

ARRYN

Look, just stop, ok? Let me get this straight - you knew I was coming? And this is all some kind of 'play'? Whose? Who's setting me up? Your lot? Or them - Line Farre?

ELUNE

My, you really are in the dark, aren't you, puplet? Well, they've certainly sharpened their acting chops. Or you really are just that... well, you know, haha.

ARRYN

We're not going anywhere—I'm not fetching you anything—until you tell me who's setting me up. Now.

ELUNE

Sigh. Why, both, of course! The whole shoddy bunch. They're planning a little ambush for us—well, you—tonight. The moment we prance through the Leol gates they'll slam shut, and fifty Hands will turn you into pâté.

ARRYN

Right. Great. So, why are you telling me this, then? Aren't you with them - your house?

Elune, cat-like, sidles over to Arryn, towering over her.

ELUNE

You should be careful who you paint as enemies from the stamps and stripes on their shields, little Grasper. We're not all painted the same.

ARRYN

I'm not walking into an ambush.

ELUNE

Quite! Nor should you. Little do they know, I've got some fireworks of my own tucked up my sleeve.

ARRYN

I see. So, you're the alternative, then, are you? How can I trust you?

ELUNE

I don't see how you can, little Grasper! But I would urge you to try. Because, you see, presuming my little display goes off without a hitch tonight, I'll soon be holding all those cards you've been trying to prise from my House's hands. One way or another.

Arryn and Elune lock eyes for a few long moments. Arryn tries to discern something - anything - from Elune's confident and elusive gaze.

ARRYN

Ok. Fine. What've you got?

ELUNE

I shall explain all you need to know on the road, puplet. Now, first things first.

Elune whips something from her pack, grasping it by its hair. She shoves it into Arryn's arms, who baulks the second she realises what it is. It's a bloody, severed head, whose former owner was of the same age and hair colour as Elune.

ARRYN

What in the daisy-fresh hells? Is this a—?

ELUNE

Striking, isn't it? Uncanny! Lucky, too, nabbing that out here in the sticks. You hang on to that, little Grasper. It's rather crucial. Now, come. The fireworks are due. They'll 'accidentally' leave the gates open here for our little escape, so we shan't have to fret about all that.

ARRYN

What do we need with th—?

ELUNE

You'll see! Now, come!

Elune strides out of the room, unconcerned with noise. Arryn stuffs the head into her pack, grimacing, and follows her out of the room.

CUT TO SUCCEEDING GAMEPLAY: ESCAPE THE ESTATE

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