

Out in the Neverblood Realm Lambaras had been reduced to a few tribes who have begun hiding out in the deep forests to avoid the constant Eight Eyes patrols who triumphantly search for the helpless creatures to give them painful and torturous demises. Lambara children have constantly seen the heads of their own kind stuck onto pikes and paraded around like some kind of trophy. The deities were desperate to try and find any way to stop the Lambaras being treated like livestock but with the Akronians quickly booting out and even exterminating tribes who refused to move out it seemed hopeless and that the creatures would soon be a distant memory and a hated one at that in the history of the Neverblood Realm. Tribes even began getting into conflicts with each other fighting for scraps of food that they find. For one tribe leader, the paranoia and secrecy were not a way that he wanted his species to go out.

"There has to be food!" A black male Lambara with his hair in a braid and a wooden mask tossed a table at the news.

"I'm sorry, there just isn't any, not anymore at least." A white female Lambara told him angrily impatiently tapping her foot.

"Not anymore? What happened!?" He growled at her.

"A tribe of Swampies took the food with them and when our scouts tried to convince them to give it to us but... they responded quite..." She handed him a bag. Taking it out of her hands he opened it up to see three Lambara heads.

"That's just great, now we get to tell their families we've got three heads to bury for them. Because I assume they burned the bodies." She nodded.
"We need to get that food if we hope to survive another day. We need to take drastic actions." He took out a Dane axe.

"Put that away! We're not going to those lengths to get food!" She yelled at him. The black Lambara approached her. Scared the Lambara collapsed to the ground as he put his head up to her ear.

"*Lakuli...*" She trembled at the tone of his voice.
"*You're starving aren't you?*" She slowly nodded in fear.
"Then we need to raid that village and get the food from them, show them that we've had enough of their abuse." He backed away from her.

"There has to be another way, this would be dragging Axorias's name through the dirt! You won't be worthy of calling yourself Chief Hodim!" Lakuli protested.

"Then why don't we see if the others agree?" He said lifting open the curtains as they went outside to see the starving village people who seemed miserable.

"Villagers! Listen up!" They all turned their attention to the two.

"We just had a group of Swampies steal food from us! And they sent us a little gift." He showed them the bag of severed heads.

"But we know that they're a lightly defended village who couldn't withstand an attack from well-equipped warriors." He revealed several crates full of armor and weapons that were reminiscent of Vikings.

"I have the gear we would need to reduce that village to ashes. If we can catch them off guard then we could easily make them pay for their crimes against us. Who is with me?" Hodim looked around for any approval only to see some murmurs and unsure looks.

"See? Even they think this is a stupid idea." Lakuli told him.

"Why not go out in glory?" They suddenly stared at him dazed, "Our deaths are decided by fate, aren't they? Then why don't we raid that village and see if our deaths are destined in the glory of battle? Show that we were willing to fight for our survival?" Now he had gotten the attention of his village people.

"Should we not show them that we deserve better than this?" The murmurs grew into sounds of approval and cheers for him.

"If Dolly is on our side then we shall feast tonight!" The Lambaras let out a roar as they rushed towards the gear and equipped themselves with all the equipment he collected over the years. Hodim looked over to see Lakuli hovering over a spear and shield.

"I can't believe we're doing this..." She said horrified at her own kind.

"Well, the tribe has decided, the decision is final," Hodim told her before heading off to get himself geared.

"*Sigh* If you can't beat em' then join em'." She grabbed a full face helmet and slipped it on as the others excitedly examined the weapons and armor. The Lambaras were ready for a battle, except there was only a slaughter waiting.

At the Swampie village, the three men had brought food in that they stole from the Lambaras. Everyone was too busy getting ready to store the food to be paying any attention to the gates.

"We should be safe, it's only Lambaras, and we know how cowardly they are." One of the killers mentioned as they set the food down.

"The feast should be great tonight." Another said stacking crates.

"When are the Lambaras going to actually die out?" The final spoke examining the contents of the crate he received.

"Remember you three need to get those barrels in storage by tonight." A female Swampie called out to them.

"We'll get to it later." The first told her.

"Thank you." She closed the door to leave the three to converse amongst themselves.

"Do you think those sheep received our little "gift"?" The second asked.

"Hopefully it'll tell em' to stop hounding us for food. They need to learn their place." They all laughed heartily. Just then they heard a banging at the door.

"Did any of us remember to close the gate?" They all looked at each other. One walked over to the gate and looked over to see who it was. Expecting another little Lambara child begging for food he was surprised to see a bunch of hungry and not to mention angry Lambaras in ridiculous get-ups armed with various weapons.

"What do you want?" He asked unamused. He watched as Hodim pushed to the front to speak with the Swampie.

"We want the food you stole from us and your blood on our weapons for what you did to our village people!" Hodim announced.

"Yeah, uh-huh, that's great. Hey, could you do me a favor? How about you just stand there?" The Swampie said as he walked away. Hodim quickly signaled for his people to stand back before he moved back and watched two buckets of embers dropped down in front of them and uselessly into the water.

"They are defenseless! Breach the gates!" Hodim called out as the Lambaras charged the gate and opened it up to allow entrance to the village. The warriors spilled into the place en masse and quickly began their raid. They swiped crates and rolled barrels onto carts all without a second thought.

"Hey! We have thieves!" A group looked over to see a few Swampie guards approaching them with spears. They no longer had fear, it was either them or the Swampies. They rushed the guards and utterly brutalized them. They were not used to the Lambaras acting so violently towards them. Blood spilled into the water and heads were rolling. Lambaras broke into homes and searched them for any scraps of food to eat right away, but not before killing any occupants who dared to fight back. When they finished they blocked off the entrances and exits before they set them alight causing any Swampie inside to burn alongside the building. It was sheer chaos as the attackers began making off with the food. The people were helpless to do anything except watch as the barbarians made off with the spoils of their raid.

"Mommy! What's going on!?" A Swampie girl cried to her mother as they watched the father argue with one of the raiders.

"That's ours! You better let that-!" He was silenced by a sword-wielding Lambara bashing him across the face with his shield and being finished off with his blade.

"DADDY!" The girl sobbed uncontrollably. Some of the Swampies were chased off deeper into the swamp where they made the decision to forget their tribe and join another.

By the end of it, all the entire village looked like a slaughterhouse. All the guards now colored the water blue-green with their blood. As Hodim walked around surveying the destruction of their raid he saw as the Lambaras brought him three Swampies.

"Who do we have here?" He asked mockingly. The three were the same ones who stole the food from them.

"Fuck you! You killed my entire family! Slaughtered them like livestock!" The second screamed at him in despair.

"We were simply taking back what was ours, now it is my turn to repay the favor." Hodim held his axe in excitement before swinging it at the first one's neck. Back at Hodim's village the warriors and he returned with the food in hand and dropped in front of the starving villagers who looked at the food in joy.

"Tonight, we feast!" Hodim called out as the Lambaras cheered for a successful raid.

News of the raid reached the many outlets of the Neverblood Realm. The survivors told their harrowing experience of Lambaras burning buildings, killing villagers without a second thought, and stealing as much food as they could carry with them.

"That's... *disgusting*." Lady Oleria announced as she gagged at the mention of heads being stuck on pikes, to her that was inhuman even when done to a Lambara.

"What has gotten into those maniacs?" General Edkrin asked as he looked over Oleria's shoulder, skimming the paper.

"I don't know, but we're going to need to double security in the quarries. I'm not in the mood to have those savages to rob us of minerals." Oleria demanded.

"Right away." He walked off to make the order known to the soldiers. The Lady slumped back into her chair and sighed.

"This better not be the start of something bad..." She mumbled to herself.

Fritzi read the paper out loud after Mizuki puked at the mention of the heads stuck on the pikes.

"Have the Lambaras lost it? It's quite unusual for them to do things like this." Hebi mentioned seeming quite intrigued by the idea.

"Whatever it is, were the heads on pikes really necessary?" Mizuki said still feeling a tad ill from reading the description.

"Well, they could've done that for a number of reasons. Do you think they might be starting to finally come around and become an actual threat?" Fritzi asked.

"Perhaps, they have found the strength within themselves to finally begin to stand up for themselves, they have become warriors, and may Gaialla have mercy on those who dare stand in their way," Hebi responded concerned by these turn of events.

Even the deities had heard of the news and some were beyond horrified at what the Lambaras did.

"Just what would drive them to commit such bloodthirsty acts?" Dolly sat there stunned unwilling to believe the recent news.

"Honestly, it was inevitable for this to happen. If you continue to treat a species like this for so long and then leave your villages unguarded then you should expect that group of them to go off and take everything from you." Shadow said looking over the group of deities who had congregated nearby the tree.

"Don't be like that Shadow! Didn't you hear some of the descriptions those Swampies gave us? There were heads on pikes." Dolly told him off.

"Aren't you the Goddess of Death? Shouldn't you be used to this kind of thing for how long you've been working?" Shadow argued.

"This is not the time to be arguing, we need to speak to Gaialla on this matter," Hotep mentioned as the deities got up and traveled to the dimension of Gaialla and Novara. There they saw plenty of more deities mentioning the same gruesome massacre to the woman with a strange skin with a galaxy like feeling to it with sparkling stars and long flaming and glowing hair of great magnitude.

"I guess we don't need to speak with her about the event," Shadow commented.

"Yes, yes I get it, but we aren't meant to get involved in these kinds of conflicts within the lives of mortals, especially if it was a life or death thing. Lambaras are on the verge of extinction and we all know that, so if they begin acting violently for food then that is the problem for the inhabitants of the Neverblood Realm. I'm done here." In a pillar of light, she vanished leaving the deities baffled.

"I foresee this is the start of a dark time for the Neverblood Realm..." Dolly said worried for the future fate of the land.

After the raid, Hodim's tribe began taking things to the next step in their idea of keeping themselves alive. Any food they found in the hands of any other creatures they would demand the food to be given to them. When those people refused they would either be chased off or even worse killed and their bodies left to the wildlife. Hodim continued to train his tribespeople to fight in order to keep themselves from being decimated by a stronger threat. With no proper farmland, it was impossible to grow any food for themselves so they had to rely on raiding villages for any proper source of food. After a few weeks, Hodim decided it was time for the next step in their revival to begin.

"Now we need numbers, we need more allies if we hope to continue our survival." He discussed this with his council of members.

"Who would those allies exactly be? There's nobody who even remotely useful within the area that would like to help us in this endeavor." One mentioned.

"Yeah, but who says we can't train up our allies to assist us in future battles?" Hodim remained cryptic which was now annoying those around him.

"Please just get to the point and tell us who we are going to ally ourselves with." Lakuli was losing patience with her chief.

"I'm talking about the other tribes, we have the food and weapons that they will join us in the revival of our race." Hodim was optimistic about it.

"Or they reject every notion of it and completely abandoning all hope for our survival." Another member stated.

"*Sigh* I guess that is another way that could go. But I'm going to do it, wish me luck." He called for his two guards and he took off to speak to the other tribes.

At the first village, he approached the villagers with a proposal of an alliance. The first Lambara to approach them was the village elder.

"Hodim! You have betrayed the Lambaras!" She yelled at him with righteous fury.

"How so?" He simply asked.

"You took the lives of innocents while greedily feeding yourselves off of their misery! You betray the will of Axorias, ditch her masks in favor of these barbaric helms." She stated unwilling to be forgiving of the chief's actions.

"But it was necessary for our survival! If you join us then we can guarantee that your villagers will survive for generations to come." He tried to justify his actions with an offer.

"That will be enough fur-ass! I think it's time for you three to go back to your little village!" Hodim and his guards turned to see a man wearing a military helmet with a long coat being followed by two more with caps instead of helmets.

"What do you bastards want?" Hodim growled at the presence of these visitors.

"We've heard of what you've started doing and honestly, it's unacceptable. Harming innocents for a little food, are we? Can't you things just sit in your villages and die?" He mocked the Lambaras as they simply stood in front of him.

"I suggest you leave now before we cleave your heads in," Hodim suggested to the leader who looked at him offended.

"What's with the hostility towards the superior species? Envious of our higher status in society?" He flaunted his medals.

"Superior? The only thing more superior than us is your ego." The guards behind him looked rather antsy and ready to kill the leader here.

"Why don't I give you one more warning? Go back to your village and we'll forgive you for this little incident?" The leader offered.

"Burn in hell, I'd rather die fighting you jackasses!" Hodim raised his axe and swung it at the leader. Quickly he ducked to the side and pulled out his sword and ordered his men to attack. Hodim's guards sprang into action as they took on the leader's henchmen. As the leader and Hodim clashed other villagers were attracted to the commotion outside.

"Everybody stay behind me!" The elder demanded. Hodim shoved the man to throw him off guard but he recovered quickly and countered him. Meanwhile, Hodim's guards were dealing with the goonies that the leader had brought with him who seemed to have trouble comprehending how such apparently simple creatures were able to compete with them. As they continued to fight a scream broke the sound of clashing weapons. The leader looked over to see one of his henchmen lying on the ground missing his head. Quickly the Hodim took advantage of this distraction and drove the axe into his abdomen causing him to double over coughing up blood. As he struggled to regain his breath the Lambara chief waltzed to his side and once again drove the axe into him this time into the back. A sickening crunch was heard and blood gushed out staining the forest floor with red and even getting some on the poor Lambara elder. The last goon attempted to run only to be stopped by Hodim's bodyguard who tripped him and drove his sword into the man's chest.

"Damn Eight Eyes." He spat on the corpse before turning to the villagers who looked in horror at the bodies that lay before them.

"Do you see this? Eight Eyes believe they can control us through fear, but they can't do anything if we fight back." He pointed to the leader.

"So we slaughter them as they did to our ancestors?" The elder asked still unsure of the Lambara's intentions for the race as a whole.

"What do we do then? Sit around like cowards and await our impending slaughter? We can finally show them that we are worthy of being considered warriors." Hodim argued his case not willing to give up.

"Perhaps we should ask your village people their thoughts? Do they want to take up arms and defend themselves, or sit around and starve themselves?" He suggested. The elder sighed looked to her village people and gestured for an answer.

"We're starving and we need food." One called out.

"My son was killed by those monsters, I want their heads!" A mother mentioned.

"I'm tired of sitting around and cowering in fear!" A third announced.

"Then let us unite! We shall take revenge against Eight Eyes and proclaim our freedom!" Hodim cried out in triumph. The rest of the Lambaras cheered in unison.

"Very well, if the rest want to take this path of bloodshed, then I won't be one to stop you all. Take me to your village so I may inspect the equipment you have." The elder spoke.

The rest of the villages played out similarly with Lambaras either agreeing immediately, being convinced by a rousing speech from him or even killing their chief when they remained adamant about not going down this path of violence. But there were a couple of villages who refused to join them no matter what Hodim said.

"Fine then! Remain docile and loyal to the ones that keep us locked in these cages waiting for us to starve away!" Hodim yelled at a tribe who simply refused to listen to him.

As he returned to his very own he was immediately horrified to what he witnessed. The Lambaras from the villages who had refused to join them were now lying dead on the ground and his villagers somberly taking the bodies and preparing to bury them.

"What happened here!? Why are our brothers and sisters lying dead before us!?" He rushed over to them.

"The villages joined together to attack us in order to stop this "wave of violence" that we're apparently perpetuating," Lakuli explained.

"Then I guess we're going to need to get rid of the opposition if we want to move any further with our revival," Hodim stated.

"Are you suggesting we kill the villages that didn't want to follow us?" The terrified female Lambara asked.

"I really wish not. But if it is what we need to do, then it has to be done." The chief sighed in disappointment at his own race's unwillingness to change themselves for the better.

Back at the enemy Lambara village, the villagers were already planning out their attack on Hodim's village.

"Chief? What are we to do?" One asked sharpening his spear.

"We need to prevent those Lambaras from attempting to attack Eight Eyes." He replied with earnest. Just then the two heard a commotion outside. As they walked out they were surprised by a sudden rush of Lambaras from Hodim's village came charging in, swiftly beginning the war.

More news hit the residents of the Neverblood Realm about another raid by the Lambaras, but now news in that the Lambaras had started a war with each other which ended rather quickly with Hodim's side.

"From the sounds of it, the winning side didn't enjoy having to kill their own kind," Shadow said still hanging around the deities for no good reason.

"You think? We know that Lambaras are very sensitive about killing their own kind, especially in a war like this." Hotep told him.

"This killing is getting out of control, is Gaialla sure we can't do anything about it?" Dolly asked horrified with these actions.

"No way, and risk the deities arguing amongst themselves?" Shadow rejected the idea.

"I suppose that could be a problem." Dolly looked away unsure how to take this situation on.

"I can't wait to see how this all pans out in the end." Shadow chuckled to himself.

With alliances and supplies now solved, Hodim decided the final step was in order.

"With everything we have now, we can finally initiate the final part of our revival." Hodim announced to his villagers.

"What would that be?" One asked.

"We migrate to the highlands and build up our new civilization there. The land is good enough to farm and isolated enough that not many enemies will bother us." He explained.

"I think we need to wait before we do that," Lakuli stated.

"Just what makes you think that?" Hodim asked approaching the woman.

"To do that we would need to go through the City of Sheep, which is heavily guarded by Eight Eyes who don't want anybody coming into the Highlands for some odd reason. They outnumber us heavily and we don't have the skill to take them on." Lakuli explained to him.

"Then I suppose we wait, build up our forces before taking them on. In the meantime, I guess we'll need to keep raiding for supplies." Hodim went back inside to plan for the next raid.

For the next few decades, Lambara breeding grew out of control with females having far more children than usual in order to populate their numbers fast enough to be able to break through the City of Sheep as soon as possible. They continued to hone their skills and train for the battle and raiding for food and materials. When Lambaras needed metal to make more weapons, they raided the quarries, when they needed food, they stole from the nearby villages. Anything they needed they stole from others, the forests they lived in provided little for what they needed and everyone else had more than they needed.

"Now this is getting out of hand! We need to do something and now!" Dolly yelled at Shadow who simply sat in the tree smiling.

"What are you worrying about? It's the others fault for taking nearly everything from them, they're just simply taking back what was theirs." He retorted.

"ENOUGH OF THAT! PEOPLE ARE DYING AND MANY MORE HAVE BECOME AFRAID FOR THEIR LIVES! IS THAT NOT REASON ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!?" Dolly told Shadow off.

"Dolly, calm down. Screaming at Shadow isn't going to do anything about it. We need to speak to Gaialla on this matter." Hotep tried to calm her down.

"I guess that might be something worth trying," Dolly replied in hope.

"Chances are slim really, but I wish you luck anyway." Shadow gave them a thumbs-up.

Back in the village, the Lambaras were training for the battle. They had grown exponentially from their old days where they were chubby and small. There were now Lambaras who towered over others sporting six-packs and burly beards. They had chosen to take after Vikings in armor and weaponry, fearlessness in battle, they also had picked up the horned helmets by their own accord despite hearing that Vikings never wore such ornaments. Hodim walked out of his tent sporting the same beard and six-pack as the other males.

"Finally with our increased forces we can begin our migration to the highlands and bring the Lambaras the greatness they deserve," Hodim called out to his tribe members.

"I suppose it is time," Lakuli said walking over to him, she had also grown more muscular since the last time and finally mastered her weapon.

"Let us begin our great journey!" The chief walked out of the village followed by the others who had packed their belongings and stored food for the trip. Soon all the Lambaras began their great journey to the highlands and were ready for a fight.

The migration took them a week as they traveled the safest path to keep as many of their soldiers alive as possible. As they reached the City of Sheep they set up camp out in the woods to prepare for the attack.

"If we get that gate down then we'll be able to break in and allow Eight Eyes feel our true fury that we have built over the years," Hodim explained the plan to his warriors.

"This plan better work, I'm not in the mood to continue raiding just for some food." A chief replied twirling his axes.

"If the fates shine down upon us then we shall emerge victorious from this battle and into the highlands. Let us call upon our warriors and begin the assault." Hodim collected his axe and walked away. The warrior picked up the horn and sounded it to alert the others.

As the army collected they marched to the gates of the city where first snow had begun in the highlands. At the gates, a simple Eight Eye guard was overlooking the pathway.

"This is so boring... what's that over there?" He wondered as the soldiers approached him. When he finally realized that they could possibly be attackers he quickly shut the gate closed and laughed at them.

"Nice try fur-asses! You aren't getting in here that easily!" The Lambaras responded to his mocking with an arrow to his neck. As he fell over into the snow more guards rushed to the gate and began yelling at each other. Hodim huffed before looking around for something.

"What are you looking for?" One of his warriors asked.

"Anything that I can use to scale the walls to deactivate the gate controls." He replied. When he looked at the dead soldier he noticed some rope on him.

"Cover me!" He ordered some of the archers who complied and began firing arrows. The soldiers retaliated allowing the Lambara chief time to collect the contents of the body. On it was a grappling hook.

"Perfect, continue firing while I get up there." He ordered the archers as he ran over to the wall and tossed the hook to the top of the wall. Soon he felt a snag and knew he was ready to climb. As he began scaling the wall three soldiers came over carrying rubble. Realizing who was there they took the debris and dropped it on him to make him fall off. With quick thinking and reactions, Hodim dodged the falling junk as he continued climbing. As one carried a brick over he took a look at the hook, then at Hodim who was dangerously close to the top. He took the piece and continually hit the hook until it fell off. Sighing with relief he relaxed, only to be met with a Dane axe being thrown into him. As he fell over Hodim climbed onto the wall.

"One has gotten over! Stop him!" A captain yelled at them. The soldiers rushed him only for them to quickly fall. They were no longer challenges for the Lambara who drove his Dane axe into their bodies causing blood to paint the walls around him. The captain took up his sword and traded blows with the Lambara. But even the captain was overpowered as Hodim cut his way through Eight Eye forces. As he busted through a door he saw the gate controls. Quickly he ran over to them but just as attempted to grab them he was pulled back by a large man wearing full body armor and wielding a spiked club. He rolled out of the way of the incoming strike. Hodim stood up and faced the soldier. The two charged each other and clashed. Though the soldier had superior strength, Hodim had speed on his side. He weaved and dodged the swings as attempted to strike back when possible. Just as he swung his axe at his side the soldier he felt a hand grab hold of his shoulder and throw him into the wall. The moment he hit the wall the soldier unleashed a powerful strike which threw him off the ground. As he got up the enemy charged him in which Hodim threw himself to the side to avoid being grabbed as the soldier ran himself into a wall. The chief took advantage of this threw all of his weight into this one throw. He could feel the connection as the axe managed to drive itself into his flesh.

“ARRRRGH!” The soldier screamed in pain as Hodim pulled out the axe and grabbed the man. With all his strength Hodim directed the man straight into a wall. As he collapsed Hodim and swung the axe full force in an arch. With a sickening crunch, the axe was driven into the soldier's head. As he pulled it out, more blood came gushing out of his head. Now with nobody guarding the gate controls, Hodim struck the controls with all his might and broke them beyond repair allowing the battle to truly begin. Outside the gates suddenly came down with a loud crash.

“For glory! CHARGE!” Lakuli pointed her spear and watched as the Lambaras rushed past her and into the city. Inside the soldiers rushed to keep the city secure from the invaders. When they clashed the two began a long and grueling battle. Both sides refused to give up as the battle raged on for hours and the body count rose. Hodim was running along the rooftops getting rid of archers.

‘There has to be some way to turn the tides of battle in our favor...’ He looked around hoping to find something to help the army in gaining the upper hand. As he searched he caught glimpse of a strange Eight Eye member who seemed to be ranked above the others. His armor was finely crafted and his blade was custom made. Hodim came up with an idea: eliminate that man and victory was theirs. He rushed over killing anybody in the way. As he landed the leader caught notice and turned his attention to the Lambara.

“So you must be the one leading the charge here...” He unsheathed his sword and got into a battle stance.

“The Lambaras will get past this city and claim the highlands!” Hodim was able to get a better look at his armor. The helmet had two eyeholes and shaped in an odd shape topped off with three feathers, dragons were engraved into his shoulder pads, and the chest plate was lined with spikes.

“I admire your tenacity and spirit child, the name’s Reggiko. What would yours be?” The leader asked.

“Hodim, remember that name when you meet Dolly.” He readied himself.

“Let us see if you’re more than what the others suggest. I’ve been dying to get a proper fight for a while.” A few moments passed then the duel began. The two traded blows as the battle below raged on. The two refused to back down knowing that their respective armies were relying on them winning. They both clashed their weapons causing a stalemate as they struggled to gain an advantage over the other.

“Is he really that crazy to fight the leader?” Lakuli wondered aloud as the two crossed weapons once more. Reggiko managed to fake out Hodim before landing a light attack into his abdomen. The Lambara chief retaliated by shoving him off and swinging his axe upon him. The commander was quick to dodge and counter his opponent’s attack with a heavy slash striking across the chief’s chest. As he collapsed Reggiko sighed in disappointment.

"The fates seriously can't just let you die here now, can they? They are so cruel to both of us today." He shook his head.

"No! It won't be! I'll survive!" He got up and steadied himself. He charged Reggiko and grabbed him before slamming him into a wall and unleashing a devastating knee into his face. The leader stood dazed allowing Hodim to get hits in. Blood splashed the walls as Reggiko felt the force of the blade graze his body.

"Perhaps I underestimated you, this is going to be a fun fight..." The commander stabilized himself back into fighting position. The two were back at it clashing weapons with each other and trading blows. Neither one would give up as the battle below continued on. Soldiers on both sides were dying and no clear winner could be seen. The two went at it unwilling to give up for their armies. The two were at equal odds with each other unable to break the spirit of the other. Two warriors legendary to their people dueling deciding the fate of the Lambaras, would they break through to the Highlands? Or would they remain raiders continuing to terrorize the people of the Neverblood Realm?

Hodim noticed the armies growing weary of the fighting in the bitter cold of the night. He attempted a risky move that would leave him wide open if he missed it. As he charged the general Reggiko seemed to know what he was planning. He rolled out of the way causing Hodim to miss his attack. The Eight Eyes warrior jammed his blade into Hodim's back impaling him and pushing him to a wall.

"HODIM!" Lakuli cried out to her chief. Reggiko pulled the blade out causing Hodim to cough up blood but the Lambara was undeterred.

"Is that the best you've got!? The fates will not allow me to fall in this battle!" He remained undeterred.

"You're got spirit and guts. I can respect that in a warrior, no matter the species." Reggiko complimented Hodim for his resolve. He was caught off guard the chief threw him off a ledge and down onto another rooftop. Reggiko quickly recovered and barely avoided the axe that came down after him. As he stood in a combat stance Hodim snarled at his opponent.

"You are free, you don't let the expectations of life confine you, people, anymore. You show the fierce side you've been hiding behind masks for all this time. You let the spirits of the wild animals that roam the forest take over you. You Lambaras have finally become true warriors, and I will proudly state the day that one can finally match my resolve and take me down in battle!" Reggiko seemed to be getting a tad too excited about this.

"Then let us see if today is the day." The resumed their fight as the struggle down below continued. Lakuli was leading the charge as she eliminated soldiers left and right without so much as a passing glance. She prayed to Gaialla that Hodim would be able to best the legend in battle and bring about a new age of Lambaras.

"Keep going! We need to secure the city for our people! For our future!" She cried out to her allies who all replied with a battle cry. The two combatants were trying anything they could to get the advantage over the other. They took turns running after each other when the other one retreated for a bit to think over a new strategy before getting back into battle. The duel which seemed to go on got to the old temple of the city where a shrine of Gaialla stood valiantly even in this time of slaughter as the fighting continued. The two climbed up the stairs trading blows on the way up before they got up to the shrine itself.

"Gaialla's power will not protect Eight Eyes from our rage!" Hodim stated.

"If you can defeat me then, I fear Eight Eyes is on their last legs. But if you can give me a worthy death then I shall forgive you for contributing to its fall." Reggiko said as he parried one of Hodim's attacks and threw the Lambara off-guard.

"Quite the honorable one, aren't you?" Hodim asked quite amazed how polite the warrior was to him this whole time.

"I have no other reason to act vain or think myself higher than others." Reggiko simply replied before shoving Hodim. The two finally made it to the top of the stairs where the shrine stood proudly. The two were exhausted from all their fighting and didn't seem capable of going on much further. Hodim, especially as the wounds he had accumulated over the duel, had come back to bite him. Reggiko seemed used to taking so many hits.

"This, this is where you fall? Shall the fates decide it?" Reggiko taunted his opponent.

"No, it won't be!" Hodim remained adamant about winning the fight.

"Then show me you are worthy of being called a warrior!" Reggiko charged him, too exhausted to dodge Hodim felt the full force of the blade enter his abdomen. As his opponent pulled out his weapon Hodim collapsed and doubled over from the wound.

"Disappointing... I really thought you were the one..." Reggiko sighed as he began to walk away and rejoin the battle. Just then he heard a groaning and coughing. As he looked over he could see Hodim get up clutching his wound tightly.

"No... this... won't be... the end... for me..." He steadied himself and prepared to fight once more.

"You have to be one of the most perseverant people I've had in a long time, you have to be my favorite duel," Reggiko replied.

"I will also be your last." Hodim threatened. He prepared to unleash one more attack that would end the fight and decide the winner. The knight circled his wounded enemy as Hodim was getting ready. Then as Reggiko charged him the chief unleashed his attack. Hodim grabbed him tightly by the torso and threw him into the shrine. As the fighter recoiled back in

pain Hodim unleashed one more mighty swing from his axe. The strike completely destroyed the warrior's armor and managed to find itself lodged just below his lungs.

"You... have... bested... me..." Reggiko could barely spit out any words.

"This battle has now been decided, the Lambaras have claimed victory." Hodim stood triumphantly over his defeated opponent.

"Then give... the... finishing blow... as... punishment... for my crimes..." Reggiko closed his eyes awaiting his fate.

"You fought honorably, you have my respect as a warrior. Unfortunately not as a moral being..." Hodim raised his axe and dropped it on his opponent. A sickening split was heard as the shrine became colored in the warrior's blood.

The battling came to a close when the armies saw Hodim leave the temple by himself. It had told Eight Eyes it was time to leave. Much of the army retreated for the hills but many were caught by the Lambaras. Plenty were stabbed, shot with arrows, and even shoved off of cliffs. One poor sap had two archers unloading every arrow they had in their quiver while another was trying to protect himself from the barrage of blades with his shield. The warriors touched shields and jumped up and down in excitement knowing that the battle had been won. Hodim limped still clutching his wounds. As Lakuli joyfully looked around she immediately became horrified to see Hodim in such a state.

"Are you okay!? Do you need a doctor!?" She ran to his aid and draped an arm around him to support him.

"I'm... fine... just get me... a medic..." He stated.

"We... won... I can't believe what we actually just did..." The female Lambara was at a loss for words.

"Hey... don't mention it... now the Lambaras may now live in greatness... we have proven ourselves... worthy..." Hodim coughed up some blood before passing out.

With that, the battle at the City of Sheep had been decided. The Lambaras, now called the Barbarians, had broken through and claimed the highlands as theirs. There they built up their civilization and thrived. The raids had nearly all but disappeared as the Lambaras began creating farms and setting up villages. All had gone the way the Lambaras wanted it to, but then the others arrived creating hostilities. The peace that Hodim hoped for wasn't going to be there for long as the Barbarians were prepared for the war that was on the horizon.