

Expanding the Warband

By: IndigoRho

Boasts and curses echoed off the walls of one of the Black Citadel's many taverns, as dozens of charr celebrated the end of another day with an excess of liquor and meat. Sporadic fights broke up the chatter, few lasting more than a minute and always topped off by a raucous round of cheers. In the middle of it all was Seia Bladesinger. The charr warrior was considered a force of nature on good days, well known for her ferocity and eagerness to leap into battle. Of course, she was also infamous for rapidly rising through the ranks by eating superiors she disagreed with.

Seia delighted in devouring foes—and anyone she found particularly annoying for that matter—often parading around with her defeated meal swaying from her gut right up until they started digesting. She even purposely wore armor that left her middle exposed just to ease consumption of such large prey, the gleaming gold of the plates covering her arms and upper chest a stark contrast to the dark brown fur of her bulging gut. Sure the odd, high-calorie diet ensured she was usually a bit stocky, but a life of training and fighting kept her in reasonable shape. Besides, the extra girth seemed to give a bit more force to her strikes.

At the moment, though, Seia was far more interested in enjoying an ale with her warband than gorging on fools. The last week of patrols had been exhausting and she deserved the break. Unfortunately the tavern proved to be the worst place to relax. On the other side of the room another charr with a long scar across his left eye stood cradling his fifth mug of ale, scowling. Pius Ashbound led a warband that had feuded with Seia's for years, and the bad blood between the two was deep, having resulted in numerous brawls. He'd lost an eye to her blade during the worst of it, which had left him both humiliated and desperate for any revenge he could manage, even if it were merely petty insults.

Fueled by booze and spite, and unwilling to listen to the warnings of his friends, Pius stumbled through the mass of revelers towards Seia. Bumping into every other person created more than enough noise to alert Seia of his approach well in advance, though the warrior did little more than sneer and continue chatting as she waited for him to finally arrive.

“Well if it isn't the illustrious Seia Bladesinger,” Pius bellowed over the crowd, drawing the attention of quite a few others nearby.

“Piss off Pius, I'm trying to have a good time,” Seia said, giving him only the faintest appearance of attention at first.

Pius snorted. “It must have been so tiring for your warband the last few days, strolling around on patrol and protecting us from warthogs. Meanwhile my warband was busy fighting tooth and nail against the Flame Legion!”

“We ran into plenty of Flame Legion ourselves out there,” Seia growled. “I even showed one of their shamans first-hand that Blood Legion stomach acids will always beat fire magic.” The boast received a few cheers from the warband members with her, as well as some onlookers.

“I'm so glad to hear you're more interested in food than battle!” Pius spat back. “Does your warband obsess over stuffing themselves as well? How long until you're all just a group of butterballs too fat to pick up a sword!”

“Another word from you and they'll have to rename you Pius Gutbound!” Seia barred her fangs.

Pius hadn't put much thought into his confrontation, and was far too drunk to back down. “You're all bark and no bite, just like your whole pitiful excuse of a—aaaarrrg!”

Seia's patience had finally worn thin, and the furious charr had grabbed Pius by the horns and slammed his head hard into a nearby table, twice. The noise was loud enough to quiet half the tavern, all eyes shifting to the newest brawl. She smashed Pius' face into the table once more for good measure, the others in her warband preventing the obnoxious rival's friends from intervening. Pius had been little more than a nuisance lately, but she wasn't about to let the insults to her warband go

unpunished, and he'd serve as a good enough warning to other idiots. Besides, she hadn't had dinner yet.

Seia raised the dazed Pius up by his horns, smiling as she saw his one good eye lazily wandering in odd directions. She opened her mouth wide and shoved his head in with little fanfare. He twitched in confusion and swatted at Seia erratically with both paws, but he obviously wasn't in any condition to fight back, another strong gulp sealing his head away completely. While Seia would have loved nothing more than to prolong her snack, she also didn't want to risk a guard interfering and depriving her of vengeance. She quickly dug her claws into Pius' arms and pinned them to his sides, ensuring he couldn't even put up the smallest semblance of resistance, and continued eating.

The rest of the tavern watched on, a mix of emotions. Quite a few had witnessed or partaken in eating others whole, but there was still a certain novelty to seeing the strange occurrence in person. Seia's neck bulged, the plates in her armor separating to handle the size of her meal. Her lips stretched around the other charr's shoulders with practiced ease, then his chest. Deep within Seia, Pius was still only vaguely aware of what was happening. His head was ringing and his vision blurred, warm breath and saliva assaulting his senses. He could feel his paws lift off the floor just as his head pushed into the stomach, but even then all he could manage was an indistinguishable mumble that was impossible to hear on the outside.

Seia's belly swelled outward as Pius emptied into it, the bulge of his head faintly visible to those looking on. The doomed drunk's footpaws were kicking more frequently now as he slowly recovered, his tail swatting all over the place. By then he was far too late. With each new long gulp Seia angled her meal upwards a little more, taking advantage of gravity to ease consumption. Bystanders started cheering her gluttony on, rowdy chants of "chug, chug, chug" echoing throughout the tavern as Pius' friends watched on in silent dismay, far too outnumbered to rescue the foolish charr.

Once Pius had been swallowed up to his knees Seia no longer needed to grasp him, instead cradling her ballooning gut as it continued to fill with delicious meat. She groped and squeezed at her middle, reveling in the squirms of her prey. Truly there was nothing quite as satisfying as humiliating a foe by turning them into mere food. No tales of valor would be shared about Pius' demise, no somber warning for new recruits, only jokes about the drunk who got gobbled up by another Legionnaire. Not to mention the inevitable rumors his skull had been added to Seia's trophy wall.

Soon only Pius' footpaws remained uneaten, giving a final twitch before Seia's jaws closed around them for good. A few gulps later and her meal was done. Seia let out a triumphant belch and shook her bouncing belly, prompting a round of cheers and laughter.

"Ah, always nice to expand the warband, even if it's only temporary!" Seia boomed. "Don't worry Pius, you'll have all the ale you could want tonight, I guarantee it. Hopefully you can swim."

As the other members of her warband poked at her gut and teased her doomed meal, Seia drained the remainder of her mug, before proudly ordering another three from the bar. The night was perfect for overindulgence, and the warrior didn't intend to stop until she'd turned her stomach into an ale-filled tomb for Pius. If things went well enough, no one would even be able to tell she'd swallowed another charr by closing time. Hopefully the tavern was stocked to handle her intentions, or Pius would be having company...