

A LESSON IN TRADE

COMMISSION STORY

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“For the first time in a long time, it actually feels like a new day.”

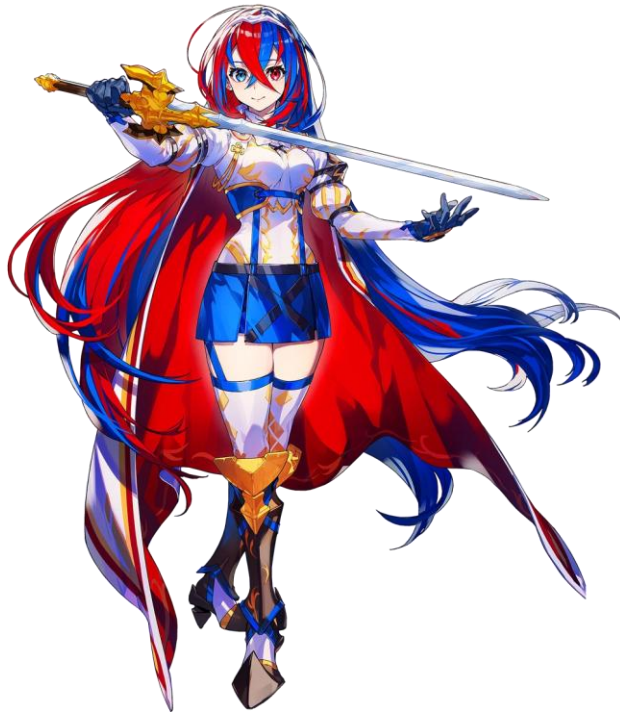
The Divine Dragon of Somniel stepped out of her quarters with the intention of getting to work for the first time in what felt like a *month*. It had been a few weeks since the Fell Dragon, Sombron, had been defeated and peace had returned to her world thanks to the efforts of the girl and allies. But just because the great evil had been defeated, that didn't mean that her role in it all had ended. If anything, it had been downgraded ever so slightly.

Alear didn't need to play the hero. No longer did her fully blue hair (as it had become over the course of her journey) need to represent the path of a hero. There was no Fell Dragon to subdue; her father was no more. And it really *did* feel like a great weight had been lifted off of her shoulders. But even so? Sombron's defeat did not mean that things in the land of Elyos would just instantaneously go back to how they had been before.

Years of damage had accumulated throughout all of Elyos's kingdoms both from earlier altercations and from when the war entered its full swing. Enter towns had been leveled, but homes could be rebuilt with time now that the only threats to rebuilding efforts were regular bandits at worst. What *couldn't* be rebuilt were the hearts of those that had lost loved ones, but time could hopefully help heal in part that pain.

“I arranged to meet with Anna today...” If Alear had been allowed to do things her way, she would have been in the nearest town helping them rebuild the day after Sombron met his end. But her closest allies

had forced her to take weeks of rest. Her awakening as an Emblem was something she'd been forced to work through near the end of the war, but now that it wasn't a necessity for her to fight, everyone had agreed it had been best that she take a break to make sure there were no complications.



But she was finally free! That rest period had come to a close, which meant that she was free to tackle a laundry list of things that she wanted to do. Among that laundry list was a number of personal favors she had decided to help those that had fought alongside her with, and Anna's was at the top of that list. She was a young merchant girl that had been searching for her family, and Alear had hopes that her recently awakened powers might be able to help in some way.

“I wonder how things have changed outside of Somniel? It feels like forever since I’ve left.” In a typical fashion for the Divine Dragon, she might have overslept a *little bit*. These weren't wartimes, so it wasn't actually *that* much of a big deal, but she *had* made plans to meet with Anna before lunch time – and that time seemed to be rapidly approaching. **“Oh no! I need to get ready!”**

Her plan *did* involve leaving Somniel. It *had* to. She'd promised to help Anna find her family, and that certainly wasn't something the two of them would be able to accomplish by remaining within their home base. She wanted to talk to some of the other Emblems about it, but the Emblem Rings weren't all in Somniel at that moment. They were spread across Elyos with the allies that they had bonded with to help with the rebuilding efforts. Once things were proceeding smoothly, they'd all be returned to Somniel's chamber where they would remain stored.

It hadn't been a good opportunity to ask during the war itself, but Alear had noticed something strange about the Emblems whenever Anna was present. It was often subtle, but the way they looked at her was with a peculiar *interest*. It was almost like they had met her before, but that was impossible as far as the Divine Dragon was aware. Was there

something going on that she wasn't aware of? That was what she wanted to find out. Maybe there was some kind of clue in whatever the Emblems knew?

“I just hope that I’m able to help Anna find at least one family member soon! She said she had *sisters*, right?” Her words were innocent and, honestly, extremely *normal*. There was no mention of a ‘wish’ or anything like that, at least not directly. But while Alear believed she had figured out all of her powers as an Emblem, that couldn’t actually be farther from the truth. Considering her importance as a physical, living Emblem, there were powers that not even *she* was aware of just yet.

Like, say, *the ability to manifest her desires*? It was a finnick ability that she couldn’t control. It wasn’t so potent of an ability that it could have instantly ended the war with Sombron or anything like that, but a desire like the one she had *just* expressed? It was well within its power, especially since it was so vaguely expressed. If this ‘wish-granting’ power could grant the wish with Alear’s own body? Then that made it all easier. Of course, the teenager didn’t exactly notice how her blue eyes began to glow all of a sudden.

Well, saying they were ‘blue’ wouldn’t have actually been a correct fact for long. Just as the young woman couldn’t tell that they were glowing, she also couldn’t tell that they were *changing color*. It began with the left eye, as its iris turned purple before any blue tone was sapped out of it to leave on a *red*. It seemed that, at least for a moment, perhaps her pure Emblem form was dissolving? Her hair and eyes had been split between red and blue at first because of her Fell Dragon blood, but her eventual transition into an Emblem had pushed that red away during the war.

But the *opposite* was actually happening. Her opposing eye ended up falling victim to the same change in color, and the very same phenomenon plagued *all* of her hair soon after – not just one side or the other. Before long? Not only had it all gone up in red, but the length ended up shortening slightly and it became *far* messier, particularly in her bangs. Rather than having her Fell Dragon blood concealed? It looked like it had been fully awakened once more... *kind of*.

“*Wh-Whoa!?*” Alear herself might not have noticed her hair changing, at least not *yet*, but she *did* feel that something was *off*. She felt notably weaker all of a sudden, like she’d become *very tired* very quickly. It also felt like something was *missing*. Her power as an Emblem? Technically *yes*, but that wasn’t what had caused her weakness when a Fell Dragon’s blood should have still run through her veins.

But all of that red had actually been a *literal* red herring. “**Why do I feel so *heavy*?**” Her hair and eyes were red, yes, but they weren’t the *exact same shade* of red that her Fell Dragon blood typically had it take. This red was slightly darker, slightly duller; because it wasn’t *actually* due to her Fell blood taking prominence within her body. It was the *opposite*: both her Emblem power *and* the Fell Dragon blood had left her, leaving her as an ordinary, run of the mill human at her core.

And yet? If the intention had *just* been to turn the Divine Dragon into a normal person, then why had her *hairstyle* change? No. It was more than that, wasn’t it? Her hair had been the most striking example of it with its burning color, but there were additional signs that something *seriously* bizarre was taking place. Her eyes had changed color too, and while more discreet, their ‘style’ had changed just like her hair had.

Of course, the ‘style’ of a pair of eyes couldn’t be changed as easily as the style of one’s hair. It wasn’t a superficial change, then. It had to be a *genetic* one. That was perhaps how her crimson eyes came to passively widen as her eyelashes thinned, giving her eyes the striking appearance of a *different person* altogether. More than that, her nose slimmed and narrowed and her lips *thinned*. All upon a face that became a little chubbier as if it was *younger* – something that was reinforced by her thinner lips.

“**Maybe not heavy? Tired...? E-Eh? Is something...?**” ...*Wrong with my voice?* There was no reason for her to end her sentence to abruptly, and in fact? Alear was the type to always finish her thoughts, and she almost never stuttered like she’d begun to. She *was* right though. Her voice sounded high. Almost *familiar*? But it was hard for her to say, especially when it sounded more and more similar to the voice she should have possessed in her memories.

Her memories of being the *Divine Dragon*, of leading an army to war with Sombron, were all *fading away*. But there wasn’t *nothing* left in their place. She could still remember the war, but her perspective of those events was becoming *muddled*. Had she fought on the frontlines, or been a supporter helping in the camps? She certainly couldn’t imagine herself *leading*. At least not with her personality being so *softspoken* and *shy*!

Alear’s hands began to fidget anxiously while they rested upon her lap. The uncertainty of things was making her *nervous*, yet that nervousness wasn’t directed towards the right places. Had they been? She surely would have noticed that her body had begun to *lighten*. What remained of the firm muscle of a warrior knight eroding away had led to some of this weightlessness, but that wasn’t as striking of a sight as the weight that had been lost elsewhere.

Well, presuming you could see it, and considering she had dressed herself up in her usual armored outfit since she had planned on leaving Somniel, there wasn't *too much* that was visible. It was certainly no simple feat to see what was happening to her *chest* because of the armored chest piece she was wearing. Armor did not *bend* nor *flatten* after all, so the fact that her C-cup breasts were *flattening away* wasn't evident at all. In a matter of moments, they had shrunk so much that there was hardly even any weight at all. Calling them *A-cups* might *still* have been too generous.

But while it wasn't obvious in her chest, it was far more obvious when it happened to her lower body. The window between her thigh highs and skirt showed off her thighs, which meant it was simple enough to watch those thighs slowly shed their weight. The thigh highs became looser and looser, eventually only propped up by blue garters that connected to her waist. Even so, her garter belt struggled to stay in place because her hips *narrowed*, something that happened in tandem with her butt cheeks slimming until they were little more than a slight bump behind her.

“I-I wish this feeling would pass... I wonder if it's because I haven't eaten yet today?” Alear *was* beginning to feel a little better, but she still wasn't clueing in to the problems with her body. It probably *wouldn't* happen at this point, not with her mentalcape already so drastically modified to accept not only new memories, but a new identity altogether. **“O-Or not...!?”** Just as she thought she'd be good to go, however, she felt *very* unsteady on her feet.

Now, there was something about everything that had happened so far that had suggested a singular conclusion. Her body had been robbed of its more mature figure (even though she'd only been seventeen), while her face, while different, had also appeared significantly *younger*. The point of all this was predictable, but her imbalance ultimately led to the final nail in the confirmation coffin. She'd become unsteady because she was *falling*. Not *literally*, mind you, but her height fell. She shrunk all the way down to 4'8", leaving her armor practically hanging off of her by the end. **“H-Huh!?”**

She was *very* confused! Wasn't she wearing the Divine One's armor? Or... No, she was the Divine One? No! What a silly thing to think! How could she hold herself to such a standard!? She must have been going insane! ...She almost ended up *actually* believing that though, because the next moment she looked down? She was wearing a familiar, white dress with a red half-vest and matching, hooded cape of a similar color that wrapped around her neck like a scarf. Her tinier feet were now fit

into tinier shoes, and the same thing could be said of her gloves. And yet? Her hair remained down.

“Wh-Why am I in the Divine One’s chambers? Was I invited? I don’t want to get in trouble...” By the time mental clarity returned to the small girl, she had become a nervous, stuttering mess that felt a little overwhelmed even though the confusion that had plagued her had somewhat subsided. *Anna* knew where she was, but she didn’t know *why* she was there and she couldn’t remember walking there in the first place. But even so, while she *was* identical to the merchant girl that was allied with the Divine Dragon’s army?



This Anna was *not* the same one as the one that had fought alongside the army, and she kept her hair loose so it was easier for people to tell the difference between her and, well...

“Did sis play a prank on me? Maybe she sent me here as a joke...” She carried herself like a *very* shy and introverted girl, lacking the confidence and business acumen that the real Anna, and most Annas in general, possessed. She seemed to be thinking of the other Anna as her *twin sister*, and that was the new reality for the two girls. It was the reality for *everyone* that had met them, in fact.

Panicked, the child fled through the doors to Alear’s chamber to try and find her sister. Even though they had polar opposite personalities, they still got on well even though her twin liked to tease her sometimes. Since they had been separated from their parents upon coming to this world, she’d stuck by the other Anna’s side like glue, so even though she was likely elsewhere in Somniel... She still didn’t like the idea of being apart!

The people that knew them just called her ‘Anna’, while they called her sister ‘Lady Anna’. It was the way they were differentiated, and Anna didn’t like being referred to with a title like that anyways. But none of that mattered in that moment! **“I wonder if sis is getting food... Oh, I hope it isn’t too crowded down there...”** That would have been terrible! She would probably sneak through the back door if that was the case!

But as she hurried down the stairs towards the main common area of the small town, a thought *did* cross her mind. **“Is the Divine One out? I’m surprised I didn’t see her there at this hour... Usually she’s still getting ready after sleeping in! Hm...”**

Well, it was *probably* nothing!