

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Here we are with the finale, it really took me some time to get it how I wanted it, but I consider myself satisfied. Honestly, this has been a great creative experiment for me, to write an almost completely original arc with my own characters and stuff really helps a lot in understanding how writing an original work would feel... Eh, maybe... one day... who knows...

But enough of my ramblings! Without further ado, enjoy the chapter!

Chapter 98: Song of the Sky-Riders and the Black Rose (Finale)

Zaryusu cooed as he let his son and daughter climb all over him, feeling at peace for the first time ever since they battled against that monstrous beast.

Who was he kidding? They were being played with... that was no battle, it was a slaughter that they barely survived only because Lakyus managed to remove the core of the monster's power.

He shuddered even now at the memory, him lying down, both of his legs bent in unnatural directions. A weak broken lizard whose only contribution could be only expressed through the power of his blade.

A shameful display unparalleled uselessness.

“Papa! Can you tell us the story?!”

Varyusu, his son who inherited the snow-white scales of his mother, asked excitedly, his short tail swishing left and right as he regarded Zaryusu as if he was the greatest thing in the world.

“Yes papa! They said you fought a monster as big as a mountain and won!”

Laky, his dark scaled little girl joined in, her amber eyes full of that same fire Crusch said he possessed too. They were just little over two years old and yet he already feared the many suitors his little girl will be sure to have.

“Children, leave your father be, he is tired and need to rest, it is also your bedtime.”

The two little ones started to protest only to be cowed when his beloved wife narrowed her blood red gaze on them, making the two jump off him and run to their room.

“Sorry Zaryusu, they are just children.”

He felt bad only seeing how apologetic his beloved was.

“N-no! It’s alright, I just-“

“Don’t lie to me husband, you are clearly not alright.”

The sharp tone hit him like a whip. For all he tried to hide it, it seemed there was no escaping his wife’s notice. But he would not have her any other way. Her observance and strength, together with her beauty, were the characteristics that made him fall for her in the first place.

“I’m sorry, Crusch, it’s just...”

He didn't really think he possessed the words to express himself. The strongest lizardman felt two arms wrap around his scaly body from behind.

"My love, you are shaking."

He heard her whisper in his ear.

"I thought I would die Crusch, die and never see you and our children ever again... that monster, it was beyond anything I heard of before, it made our legends sound like jokes... even the White Dragon Lord could not hope to match the hopelessness and despair such a monster caused."

He felt the two arms tighten against his chest.

"You can always quit... Zaryusu, I just want you to be happy, and if that means having you to myself or away for long periods... I am fine with either, but you must promise... to always come back to me, no matter what."

They both knew that was not something he could promise. He had been close to death most of his life.

Starvation, war, survival, battles. Hell, since he joined Seven's Own Goal the risk to his life decreased drastically, and that said a lot.

'What did I do to deserve someone like you in my life' he could not help but wonder as he basket in his wife's embrace and comfort.

"No, I promised myself I would see everyone have a better future... especially you, Varyusu, and Laky, I want this world to be a place where you all will be able to live... doing what you

want, going where you want, when you want... to be free from the hatred suffocating this world.”

Zaryusu felt something wet and hot crawl down his spine. He didn’t need to turn around to realize what the liquid was.

“And also... the young ones lost those they cherished... maybe loved... and if they are willing to go on, even after that, how could I call myself a warrior ever again, let alone have the honor of wielding Frost Pain, if I run at the first encounter with death?”

If anything, that just made him feel like he had not trained remotely hard enough.

And to think that he had improved by miles after he started learning under the former King of the Quagoa. Till now he had never used his body as a weapon of its own, he had always faced those similar or even larger than himself after all. But Riyuro showed him how demi-humans’ bodies are far more weaponizable than he ever thought before.

His bite alone could tear off limbs of weaker foes and served as a secondary weapon to his blade. His claws, while not nearly as sharp as a Quagoa, could still inflict significant damage on unarmored foes and even light-armored ones. But the biggest surprise had come to the usage of his tail, something he never found a use for outside of communication. And while not quite as powerful as his jaw or sharp as his claws, it was still a weapon that he could use if a foe managed to catch him from behind, which was an unvaluable advantage in combat.

“How can you be so dumb... and at the same time say such well-thought out things?”

He smiled sadly at Crusch's words. His little speech was not wise, more like delusional and idealistic, that is what they would be called by most. And she knew it, but apparently, just like him, she also chose to live in a world in which such words made sense.

She was his wife after all.

"I think we will not depart on any adventure for a while, once I see Lakyus returned to safety, I will ask to come back for some time."

He finally said making Crusch squeal in happiness as she jumped on him.

"Good! Good! I don't want Varyusu and Laky to grow up without their father around!"

The dark scaled lizardman hugged his wife fiercely. He very much feared that his constant absence would become a subject of resentment on her part, but apparently she was still happy enough to jump him at the news.

"Well... since you are still going away for a bit before coming back... I will still give you my welcome back present now anyway..."

Zaryusu gulped, he knew what that hissing tone meant, and the rare redness going from her neck to her cheeks took away any doubts from what she had in mind.

{Arche's P.O.V.}

She sat on the edge of the forest. Contemplating nothingness... well, that was not exactly right. She was technically deciphering something, but she had already done that... and she could not make anymore sense of it than the first time she tried.

But for all she should be elated of having in her hands a relic of the Eight Greed Kings which could probably sell for enough wealth to start a new lower noble family, her full focus was still on the boy not far from her.

Rayne was never the same since that day. His body was healed but he seemed to space out far more often than usual. And he had problems sleeping ever since that night, turning, shivering, and whimpering in his sleep. Even with her hugging him for some comfort, she was just so much better, coming back to the previous peacefulness seemed impossible by now.

And honestly, she had no idea what to do. Or if she could do anything at all in the first place.

Rayne had been faced with an impossible choice. And he chose to save her when she thought she was done for. At the cost... of someone very important to him.

Ash was not a girl Arche particularly liked. How much that had to do with her infatuation with Rayne and how much with her actual personality will forever remain a mystery.

But one thing was for sure. She would have stood no chance against her resolve, Arche just knew that among the two of them, Rayne would have sooner or later fallen for her. How could he not? When she was far better than Arche in every prospect.

She was outspoken about her feelings, direct in her intent of courting him, she did not hide behind excuses and always said what she thought. She was arguably as beautiful as Arche, just in a different way, which Rayne seemed capable of recognizing. She was funny and did not give into her emotions as easily as Arche did. She couldn't even hold up on legacy, the thing she had always

been proud of, for what was her paltry noble title with just over a century of history if compared to the terrible, and yet still grandiose, legacy of the Eight Greed Kings, to not speak of the wyvern rider bloodline.

Arche was just outclassed on every side... and yet, when it came down to it, she had still been the one getting saved at the cost of Ash's life.

And now the boy she held dear, no... the boy she loved, was destroying himself over it. And she could only watch, powerless and pathetic, even with all her names and magic, she was nothing but a girl.

How pathetic...

The bitterness of that realization she kept at bay for the longest time came back to bite her.

Fuck this! She was not going to stand by and do nothing when the boy who always supported her was suffering! That would just be like spitting on the memory of Ash and her own self.

She was not foolish enough to believe she could actually get him through it. That was something only he could do, but she could be there every step of the way. Yes! That was what she should do! What she had to do!

She moved swiftly, before her determination would be snuffed out by her cowardice, she reached Rayne and locked her hand with his. He just reciprocated her gesture, tightening the grip, as if he feared losing her too if he let go.

"How do you feel?"

That was a dumb question if she ever asked one. But she also really had no idea how she should approach this.

“I’m fine, my leg is as good as new after Lakys got her hands on it...”

The boy said in that monotone voice that sounded so wrong coming from him. Nothing like the vibrant curiosity or emotional tone he possessed before.

“Not what I meant...”

The blonde caster mumbled, apparently loud enough for him to hear since he turned toward her. That green energetic gaze that had made her heart skip a beat during those emotional moments they spent together, nowhere to be found. In its place a dull and annoyed gaze was what greeted her.

“I told you I don’t want to talk about it... leave it alone Arche... it is none of your business.”

She felt his grip relent in their interlocked hands, as if he was trying to escape her, but she did not let go, holding to it like it was the last thing that would ever connect them.

He tried to pull away, increasing his strength, but she still did not let go.

“I-I just... please Rayne, you are not well, I know... I can’t help-”

“Exactly! You can’t help! So let go!”

The boy interrupted her vehemently, so unlike him, as he still tried to pull away, his hand slipping more and more from her grasp.

“I want to be by your side! You idiot!”

Arche finally gave in to her emotions and her true feelings surged out of her mouth like oil set on fire.

“No, you don’t! I know you have your goals in life... and I don’t blame you for that! But don’t expect me to just lean on you until you get tired and just leave!”

That last part took her aback, the spite in his words hurt her to her core but that was only for an instant as a wave of retaliation and indignation surged forth right there and then.

“Is that what you think of me?! That I would just...”

She didn’t even find the words to describe the action, riled up as she was in her indignation at the sole thought.

“Tell me it isn’t true! I have known that for a long time... since we went to the Empire... and that is all right, I don’t intend to be an obstacle in your way, even if your feelings come from a place of honesty, and you really stuck with me... you will one day look back and resent all that you could have been and gave up, and you are going to resent me for it.”

Rayne’s voice quieted the more he spoke, his vulnerability laid bare before her like an open wound.

That shut her up for a moment. She had no idea he had been carrying something like that on his chest for all this time... But still! That only spurred her on!

“And how do you know that?! Huh!”

This time it was his turn to be taken aback as she closed the distance between the two of them.

“You are smart, but you are not so smart that you can read my mind, nor predict the future, now, are you? Unless you have been

holding back on me this entire time! So what if I want to be the next head of my house? That and being by your side are not mutually exclusive!”

She explained her point to a still unconvinced Rayne.

“But your parents-“

“My parents can keep their opinion to themselves! Or even nag on me as much as they want! I am not going to change my mind... not about this.”

Arche rebutted with the ferocity and conviction of a proud lioness.

“You... would do that for me? Why?”

The stunned boy asked, Arche taking advantage of his state to wrap her arms around him in an embrace. She kind of hated that by now, Rayne had grown so much her head could only reach to his chin, but that at least served to hide her face better from his gaze.

“Because I love you... you dummy...”

Her face burned with embarrassment at the admission. For all they have done far more things that any normal engaged couple would. She found that confessing and actually saying the words aloud was the most embarrassing thing ever.

Silence persisted between the two, making anxiety rise inside Arche’s heart.

Why was he not answering?

Why didn’t he say it back? Was that not how it worked?

Didn’t he feel the same?

That last traitorous doubt could not help but make its way to the forefront of her mind. But before she could pull away to see what was wrong, she felt two arms wrap around her back, holding her tight as if she was his lifeline.

“I-I can’t... Arche... I am too weak...”

Those words made her heart plummet. What was he saying?

“If anything was to happen to you... because I couldn’t protect you... I... I-“

She didn’t hesitate as her hands moved of their own volition, grasping the boys’ cheeks and pushing him down to meet his lips with hers mid-sentence.

They separated after what seemed to be an eternity, gasping for air.

“I want to be by your side... not because you have to protect me... but because I want you, do I really have to spell this out? You dolt...”

She whispered as she held him by his cheeks, uncaring of the tears he just began to shed wetting her hands.

She just didn’t want to see him hurt anymore, that would be enough for her.

{Great forest of Tob}

{Leinas’ P.O.V.}

The imperial knight marched forward, her gaze attentive in case any of the inhabitants of the forest decided to suddenly attack them, even though they were near the clearing where the goblin tribe they befriended set up their nest.

But even though her eyes were seemingly darting around, she could not help but have her mind focus on a completely different matter.

Her lady, Lakyus, she... had not been the same ever since they departed the Frostfang. She was cheerful, positive, and enthusiastic to the point of infecting everyone with her feelings, but now... she barely spoke, Leinas could swear she had not seen one of her signature smiles ever since that day.

To lose a loved one was a heavy burden upon the heart. For all she did not consider her and her fiancée's relationship nearly comparable with what Lakyus and Kaelin had, she still remembered the hurt of the betrayal that she had only managed to bury under the vindication she got afterwards. But to just lose a loved one in front of your eyes... that was not a hurt any vindication will ever satisfy.

She entered the clearing, seeing how her comrades already put up tents to spend the night while Vulmitar was already lying down, probably exhausted from flying the entire day.

"I brought the wood."

She announced as she placed the said material on the ground where Riyuro prepared the ground to start a fire.

"Good, I was starting to feel quite hungry... fish might have too many bones, but it certainly has a great taste when well roasted."

The demi-human said as he arranged the wood and waved over Arche who immediately lighted it on fire with a movement of her hand.

Leinas just moved away toward her lady, right now the last thing she felt like doing was discussing food.

“My lady, dinner will be ready soon.”

She announced noticing how Lakyus was just sitting there on the grass, contemplating the blade she just acquired from their ordeal.

The sword was unlike anything Leinas ever saw before, made of the same material as the Cursed Sword, making it look like someone engraved the starred night-sky on it.

The blade was long and slightly curved, it widened from the hilt and tapered into a sharp needle-point at its end, she also noticed the lack of an hilt, something that could be considered a design flaw, but that ultimately served for the swift and fast-paced combat such a weapon likely allowed and was meant for.

After all the blade was so uniform and would probably feel like an extension of the wielder’s arm, with that in mind it would be only detrimental to add anything interfering with the flow.

She came back from the trance induced by the sight of the blade. Honestly it was quite worrying that every thought in her mind ceased to exist as soon as she laid her eyes on it, as if it possessed some kind of attraction capability.

“Lady Lakyus.”

She tried calling her leader again as she grasped her shoulder to turn the girl away from the blade.

“Uh... uhm... yeah... what is it Leinas?”

The younger blonde asked without giving away any emotion she might have been feeling.

“Dinner is ready.”

She repeated making Lakyus snap back to reality completely, as she sheathed her new blade and stood up from the ground.

“I see, thank you... you didn’t meet the tribe while searching around, did you?”

The blonde knight asked hopefully. Leinas hoped that seeing the tribe doing well would have made her lady realize that what she did was still bettering the world, bringing her spirit up a little. But alas, when they arrived, there was no trace of the goblins, and their lair looked ransacked.

“Unfortunately not, but they might have relocated to the western side of the forest, you yourself told them that they could make good trade with the small villages bordering the forest.”

Leinas gave the bad news accompanied by a spark of optimism that Lakyus seemed to desperately need. Honestly, when she heard Lakyus propose the concept to the goblins, she had been surprised by the well-thought out idea... she knew Lakyus was no fool of course. But the idea of having the goblins, who knew the forest and its dangers like the back of their hands, exchange resources found in the forest with humans in exchange of food and materials that were hard or impossible to come by in the forest was honestly a great attempt at ultimately integrating the two societies together.

A first step toward the world of understanding she had spoken of so fondly.

“Yeah, I think you might be right... we should ask around in E-Rantel if anyone heard anything about it.”

Leinas almost felt a smile come to her lips as the old Lakyus seemed to have resurged, even if hesitant and for a moment. That meant she was still there. Just ready to be brought out once more.

“We shall, Lady Lakyus.”

With that the two of them moved back toward their group who was starting to serve dinner.

It was around the end of their meal when she noticed something strange.

She noticed how Riyuro, the one with the keenest senses in their group, especially at night, was taking smaller bites of his roasted fish, his eyes narrowing as if focusing on something. While, at the same time, Vulmitar turned his head in a certain direction, his maw half open as if he was mimicking being asleep but his tense muscles screaming otherwise.

Those were not traits anyone could notice if they didn't know the two of them, or were not as observant as she was. All of that pointed to there being someone currently observing them.

Leinas grabbed another skewer with her left hand, lowering her dominant one to her side in a natural way, but making sure it was just a few centimeters from her spear currently lying next to her. Apparently she was not the only one, as Zaryusu also lowered his hand with the excuse of scratching his tail but in reality just placed his hand closer to Frost Pain.

The only ones who seemed to remain unaware were the youngest of them. be it because they had different burdens currently occupying their mind, or because they did not develop the same battlefield awareness those older than them had, was a mystery.

Riyuro leaned forward to grab another fish only to use his other hand to draw an arrow in one specific direction and drawing the number five on the ground. Leinas just blinked twice signaling the Quagoa she understood.

She took a deep breath as her grip on her spear tightened. She immediately stood up and shot her spear in the direction Riyuro indicated.

Whoever was there was pretty good considering they managed to parry her spear. Yet that was enough for everyone to start moving.

Zaryusu created an ice wall to mask their movement as Riyuro darted for the forest, probably trying to mimic himself among the darkness to strike their enemy from behind with a surprise attack.

Vulmitar had already moved to attract the attention of the enemy group as a dragon of his size certainly would in order to hide Riyuro's move.

The wall of ice was soon shattered by a fireball which was promptly stopped by Arche and Rayne who answered in kind with their own spells.

Meanwhile Leinas' spear returned to her hand, courtesy of the enchantments place on it, as she joined Lakys on the frontline. The two of them darted toward their opponents with the support of Zaryusus and Vulmitar using their ice to interfere with the enemy's visibility and movement.

An individual in a strange red armor came into view, but Leinas' eyes were focused on the caster behind him who was already using spells to reinforce said individual, just one nice shot and he should be out of this fight for the most part, which would give them an advantage.

With that in mind, her spear shot once more aiming at the armored individual as a distraction, only for the enchantment on her blade to activate and completely change its trajectory toward the caster.

Though, much to her shock, the red armored individual still managed to grab her spear at the last second but in the process also let himself open, something Lakys took full advantage of and hit him directly with an empowered Kilineiram sending him stumbling back with a gasp.

“OI! Oi! Wait a second! Time out! Lakys!”

An unfamiliar voice yelled from inside the armor as he dodged the next strikes of an advancing Lakys who stopped at the call of her name but did not lower her guard.

“Who are you?”

She questioned as the armored man regained his balance and let go of the spear which returned to Leinas’ hands instantly.

“Eh, last time I saw you, you were indeed a little pipsqueak, no wonder you don’t recognize my voice, that’s on me...”

The man said as he placed his hands on his helmet before removing it, revealing the face of a middle aged man with trimmed back dirty blond hair, a streak of which was dyed red, and sporting a braided goatee. Leinas could have considered him an handsome man if not for the fact his ice-blue eyes seemed to hide something darker behind them.

“I don’t know you.”

Lakys said out loud, seeming to not recognize the man even though he acted way to boldly to only be an acquaintance.

The man drought a hand to his chest as if he just suffered a stab through his heart as a mocking expression of pain overcame his face.

“You really wound me niece, to think you don’t recognize your favorite uncle who used to tell you tales of his adventures while you sat over his lap.”

Lakyus’ eyes went wide at the man’s declaration, as her blade lowered, making Leinas also relax a little in return.

“Uncle... Azuth?...”

The younger blonde questioned, seemingly shocked by the meeting. Though Leinas was already considering the facts. She was not unaware of this one’s identity, the leader of Red Drop, the only adamantite adventurer team of Re-Estize. Lakyus had told her of him, and if they met anywhere else, she would not have had a problem with it.

But this? Meeting randomly in the Great Forest of Tob? Exactly in the moment they came back? In the exact place they would set up camp after flying over the forest? Fat chance this was random by any means.

The hostilities had clearly stopped by now as the two teams kept looking at each other with distrust, except for the uncle and niece pair.

“So, I guess I should not skewer this lot like gutted fish?”

Everyone turned in the direction from which the question came only to be met by the sight of Red Drop’s caster and their probable scout, judging by her equipment, who were currently having Riyuro’s claws pointed at their respective backs. And for all they showed professionalism in not panicking, Leinas could clearly see how they were sweating profusely at their predicament.

“AHAHAHAH... Niece! I was told you kept some interesting company! But this is even beyond my expectations! An adult

Frost Dragon and a Quagoa capable of sneaking on Sheera! You must tell me how you came by such interesting individuals! Let's meet back in E-Rantel, so we can talk properly over some beer!"

The leader of the adamantite team laughed wholeheartedly.

"I can't drink..."

Lakyus mumbled half-embarrassed and half-anxious at the current predicament.

"Ah! I see you are afflicted with my brother's weakness, should have guessed so seeing how you are his daughter... well more for me then!"

The man said before retreating in the forest followed by his group.

{E-Rantel}

{Riyuro's P.O.V.}

He usually avoided human taverns, too many gazes, not that he didn't receive stares while just walking around but he really got irritated when it happened while he was enjoying a fine meal. But he had a bad feeling this time around and so decided to stick with Lakyus as she had dinner with her relative and his gang.

They were pretty powerful, no wonder they were considered the peak of humanity among adventurers, even though he was pretty confident in defeating all of them in a one on one... all except that Azuth, that guy felt wrong, like a total pushover and someone who was the weakest among his group... but he could not forget his instincts screaming for him to run when he saw him in that red armor.

That was a feeling he only felt a handful of times in his life. With the White Dragon Lord, that magic caster Satoru, the damned

undead they had just faced, and now this one. He narrowed his eyes at the man as he laughed while Lakyus and him exchanged a few stories. Was he really that good at masking his presence? Riyuro could swear he felt little to no danger when in his presence right now. If he didn't know any better the two versions of him seemed like completely different people.

He downed his mug. Quagoa did not enjoy alcohol in any meaningful way, nor did he know if it was even possible for him to get drunk, not that he liked the taste of alcohol in the first place. He rather stick with some water with lime that he learnt to enjoy ever since he was exiled.

Either way, he could do nothing about the current situation... apart reporting his feelings to Lakyus later. For now he should just accept the fact this meeting was apparently good enough for Lakyus to regain some of her positive attitude she had lost ever since they left those dreadful mountains.

“Oi boss! Tell her about those freak goblins!”

One of the warriors from Red Drop spurred on their leader half-drunkenly judging by his reddened face.

“Yeah, those ones believed themselves merchants or something!”

The woman he previously held to his claws' edge added in a mocking tone.

“Now, now... don't be so disrespectful... those magic weapons sold for a lot, I think they funded our team for a month, which is nothing to scoff at.”

The caster continued joking even if the mood had clearly shifted in Riyuro's eyes even with everyone else none the wiser to the shift.

“Fine! Fine! I feel like you guys got really hung up on that one!”

Azuth waved off his team as he turned to a Lakys who had clearly lost her good mood and was instead seemingly staring into nothingness.

Riyuro knew that stare, she had seen it before, and this would turn out ugly very soon if those fucks didn’t shut their mouths.

“So, there was a quest for the extermination of this group of goblins who apparently got their hands on some fancy magic weapons and adventurer feared they would attack a village or something... weird thing was, that when we tried to approach them they thought we were there for trading and tried to sell us stuff and-“

The idiot finally stopped talking when even he could not ignore the absolute death stare his relative was sending him.

It was an instant. Riyuro was already prepared and so managed to stop Lakys from unsheathing her blade by restricting her hands even though she had already kicked out her chair and was halfway across the table already.

“YOU KILLED THEM! YOU FUCKING BASTARDS! WHAT DID THEY EVEN DO TO YOU?!”

Riyuro kept holding Lakys from actually assaulting her uncle even as the girl yelled and trashed in his grasp trying to unsheathe her blade. The whole tavern was now looking at them, the chatter completely stopped.

“Lakys! Calm down, they were just some goblins!”

Riyuro mentally cursed that idiot human and his loudmouth.

“SO WHAT?! DID THEY DO SOMETHING TO YOU?! THEY WERE JUST EXISTING! TRYING TO MAKE A LIFE FOR THEMSELVES! YOU ARE JUST AS VILE AS THE DEMI-HUMANS WHO TREAT HUMANS AS NOTHING MORE THAN.”

Before Lakyus could possibly say something she would regret later on, Leinas placed a hand over their leader’s mouth.

This was bad... Lakyus was not thinking straight right now. He dragged her away from Azuth.

“We are leaving.”

The Quagoa barked to the rest of his team who seemed ready to throw down as soon as someone actually did something, but who obeyed nonetheless. Thank Pu for small mercies...

He kept dragging a screaming and kicking Lakyus away and out of the tavern...

What a mess...

“Fucking humans...”

The mumbled under his breath as he now knew he would not get a wink of sleep tonight.

{Ainzach’s P.O.V.}

The Guildmaster looked over his paperwork. Ever since he became the head of the E-Rantel’s adventurer guild he unfortunately spent most of his time on budgets and reports instead of actually managing adventurers’ matters.

If he could go back, he would actually have suggested choosing an accountant for the position. Unfortunately adventurers were a

hot-blooded bunch and would not allow someone who wasn't one of them to represent them on a national level.

But it was in situations like this that he would have actually preferred to deal with budgets reports a hundred times over. For this was a real mess involving the only adamantite team of Red-Estize and another team.

The mere fact their best team, a reason for national pride was involved, would often automatically mean they would be in the right, even if they were wrong. But unfortunately, the other team was not some no names he could just give a demotion to and send home without supper.

For they had the open backing of one of the most, if not the most, powerful individuals in the kingdom. Someone that could send adventurers in an economical crisis only with a single word.

And it was on his shoulders for this not to occur and make sure the adamantite team Red Drop was also not inclined to leaving the kingdom after this perceived slight.

Truly... he should have just kept adventuring till his old bones finally gave out instead of being pushed into this position...

A knock interrupted his thoughts, not that he had any doubts about the identity of the one currently outside his office.

"Guildmaster, the leader of Seven's Own Goal has arrived, as you requested."

The voice of Milly announced who he had been awaiting since he received the report of the incident that occurred yesterday evening this morning.

"Send her in."

He immediately answered and the door swung open, revealing a very familiar blonde girl, sporting a look that he could say took him aback, for he recognized none of the hostility and barely controlled rage on the face of the often cheerful girl.

She advanced without a word, stopping only when she was in front of his desk, not taking the seat which was prepared for her.

They stared at each other as Ainzach reassessed the situation.

“Platinum rank adventurer leader Lakyus, I have been notified of the altercation that happened yesterday evening in one of the taverns servicing the guild.”

He began his speech as he had planned since this morning.

“I will remind you that unsheathing your weapon against a fellow adventurer is severely forbidden in and outside the city... Luckily no one was harmed and violence did not escalate further.”

He continued as the expression on Lakyus’ face remained neutral, as if nothing of what he said affected her in the slightest.

“Normally such an act would be demotion-worthy, but I have already spoken with Red Drop’s leader, Azuth, and he does not intend to press the guild on pursuing the matter any further, but I will warn you that you will have to work hard to recover from this and reach the Mithril ra-“

“What of Red Drop? What will be their punishment?”

Lakyus interrupted him without hesitation, speaking for the first time in such an unfamiliar deadpan tone that Ainzach could not help but be stunned for a few seconds.

“Pardon?”

He asked even as Lakyus' expression changed for the first time from stoicism to an actual scowl.

"They have assaulted and killed a group of individuals, nonviolent individuals who only meant to trade their wears to keep on living and flourishing, they cut them down, even the children."

The girl explained making Ainzach actually mentally recoil for a moment as he thought over her words, till something clicked in his mind.

"Are you perhaps referring to... the goblin extermination quest?"

He asked, just to make sure they were actually referring to the same event.

"The fact such a quest existed in the first place is outrageous enough... but the fact a top tier team who clearly understood the individuals targeted were not a threat still went ahead and slaughtered them is a crime against life, and the adventurer's creed of protecting the innocent."

Ainzach refrained from massaging his head. Of course... of all the reasons... but still, he could not certainly punish a team, let alone the top team of Re-Estize, for completing a quest and killing demi-humans.

"Red Drop simply completed the assignment... there is nothing else to discuss on the matter... killing demi-humans is not against the rules, and our guild's oath of protection applies only to citizens of the kingdom and humanity as a whole."

Ainzach saw the flash of rage passing through the girl's emerald eyes at his words and he almost flinched when her hand darted for her pocket, even if he knew she was unarmed. The blonde

slammed something on his desk hard enough to crack the magically reinforced wood.

She removed her hand revealing the platinum tag symbolizing her rank.

“Fuck your rules.”

The venomous words almost struck him like a physical blow, as he felt like he was being pinned to his chair by an invisible force.

“Fuck your guild.”

The blonde closed the distance between them, snarling viciously with a raging fire burning hellishly in her eyes till they were face to face.

“And fuck you.”

She spat out that last insult as if she had something disgusting stuck in her throat.

“Seven’s Own Goal stands for the safety and cohabitation of every being in this world who would rather live a peaceful life than a senseless racial war... and if we will see another team attacking unprovoked innocent individuals, humans or not... we will kill them like the rabid beast they are.”

And with those last words the blonde turned around and marched out of the room, slamming the door behind her, leaving only a dented desk, a platinum tag, and a Guildmaster who could only come up with one thing and one thing alone in that moment.

“Fuck...”

A.N.

Woohoo! Finally finished this mini arc! Really hope you guys enjoyed it! And I would love to hear your opinions on the arc in its entirety! Feedback is always incredibly useful to better myself.

So please, I would ask you more now than ever before to leave your opinion in a comment / review!

Really curious to see what you guys think of the current developments. But also I have some nice updated character sheets for you all!

PS: for those interested the Corrupted Sword Lakys has acquired is a flyssa, a north-african blade which is one of my favorite type of blade.

So have fun! And stay safe! Till next time!

Name: Lakys Alvein Dale Aindra

Title: Knight of the Third Princess

Job: Noble Marquis Heiress, Apprentice of the genius swordsmen, Apprentice of the warrior captain, Apprentice of the gods' descendant, Adventurer, Wielder of the Dark Blades

Residence: Satoru's mansion (Formerly) Wherever the wind brings her

Job Level:

Noble (2)

Swordswoman (10)

Blade Master (8)

Martial Artist (5)

Cleric (2)

Death Follower (7)

Karma: +300 (Kindhearted Guardian)

Hobby: Training. listening to Satoru's tales, cherishing her friendship with Renner. bringing peace to this conflict-torn world.

"She refuses her noble duties as heiress and instead wishes to travel the world and bring peace to the lands torn apart by discrimination and war, and finally bring an end to the conflicts between races."

Name: Rayne Bollen

Title: Lightning enthusiast who favors flat girls

Job: Apprentice of Satoru the magic caster, Adventurer

Residence: Satoru's mansion

Job Level:

Magic Caster (9)

Electromancer (6)

Arcane Caster (5)

Magic Specialist (1)

Death Follower (5)

Karma: -50 (Guilty Lover)

Hobby: Studying magic alongside Arche. Reading. Sewing. Cooking.

“Rayne is the only child of Randel and Marietta, ill since the day he was born, he was saved when the magic caster Satoru healed him with a potion. From that day forth Rayne swore to become like his savior and be a magic caster capable of saving lives. He is hopelessly enamored with the magic caster noble Arche but torment by fear and guilt.”

Name: Arche Eeb Rile Furt

Title: Tsundere fire enthusiast

Job: Apprentice of Satoru the magic caster, Noble Heiress, Adventurer

Residence: Satoru’s mansion

Job Level:

Noble (3)

Academical Magic Caster (2)

Magic Caster (8)

Pyromancer (6)

Arcane Caster (4)

Magic Specialist (1)

Death Follower (5)

Karma: +50 (Moderately Neutral)

Hobby: Studying magic alongside Rayne. Reading. Consoling Rayne.

“The heiress of the Furt noble House. Her upbringing as a noble and a holder of a powerful Talent made her overconfident. After her meeting with Satoru the magic caster she was sent to

spy on him by the emperor under the ruse of apprenticeship. She is hopelessly enamored with the magic caster Rayne and seeks to be by his side."

Name: Leinas Rockbruisse

Title: Self-appointed Knight of Lakyus

Job: Knight, Adventurer

Residence: Satoru's Mansion (Formerly) Lakyus' side

Job Level:

Noble Fighter (10)

Assassin (1)

Priest (7)

Holy Blade (5)

Spear Master (7)

Death Follower (2)

Karma: -50 (Ambiguously Neutral)

Hobby: Training with Lakyus. Secretly reading smut books.

"The dishonored noble heiress of an imperial family. Her fall into disgrace and abandonment caused her to spiral into a cycle of endless resentment and hatred, a curse far more powerful than the one visible on her body. She was saved from herself by Lakyus who she considers the pinnacle of what a human should aspire to be and is willing to commit atrocities in her name."

Name: Zaryusu Shasha

Title: Strongest Lizardman Warrior

Job: Wielder of Frost Pain, Adventurer

***Residence: House in Green Claw's Territory (Formerly)
Lakyus' side***

Racial Level:

Lizardman (3)

Job Level:

Fighter (10)

Sword Master (6)

Ranger (2)

Bodyguard (2)

Dauntless Sentinel (2)

Karma: +150 (Well-meaning Follower)

***Hobby: Discovering the world. Training. Bettering his kind's
lives.***

***"The strongest lizardman forged by a dreadful war dictated by
desperation. After witnessing such misery since a young age, he
decided to travel the world in search of something that would
show him that life could be more than famine and misery. He
found himself captivated by Lakyus' will and ideals for a better
world and her actions toward such a goal."***

Name: Pe Riyuro

Title: Strongest Quagoa to ever Live

Job: King of the Quagoa (Formerly), Adventurer

Residence: Feo Berkana (Formerly) Lakyus' side

Racial Level:

Quagoa (10)

Quagoa Lord (10)

Job Level:

Emperor (common) (1)

Monk (8)

Ki Master (4)

Vanguard (2)

Karma: +50 (Lawfully Neutral)

Hobby: Bettering his kind's lives. Training. Eating delicacies (according to him)

"The proud King of the Quagoa who managed in his lifespan to unite all the warring clans under one banner and bring the dwarves on the verge of extinction. Put in a corner with his kind's lives on the line he decided to join forces with Lakyus, and soon came to see her as a friend. Banished from his domain and the ones he wished to protect, he now aspires to see the world unburdened by his former crown."

Name: Vulmitar

Title: First User of Frost Breath

Job: Adventurer

Residence: Feo Berkana (Formerly) Arche's and Rayne's side

Racial Level:

Dragonling (10)

Young (10)

Adult (10)

Job Level:

Cryomancer (5)

Arcane Dragonoid (1)

Magic Specialist (1)

Karma: 0 (Completely Neutral)

Hobby: Bettering his ability with magic, Study alongside Arche and Rayne, Exploring the world

"The only Frost Dragon born with the ability to use Frost Breath, a far more powerful version of his kind's Freezing Breath, this ability come at the cost of a weaker body compared to his kin. Mocked for his apparently useless ability, he had lived a silent life of averageness, preferring to better his gift for magic compared to his more brutish kin. After his battle with the united forces in Feo Berkana, he stroke up a friendship with the human magic casters Arche and Rayne. Now he spends his days training and studying with his two friends."