

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Well, I am back guys and gals! Took me a while to finish this as you might have noticed. Well, I actually started this with another plan but I changed idea midway through and ended up writing my first chapter with only a single P.O.V. in it. I feel like an in-depth perspective on certain characters was needed and so here we are.

By the way I recycled the stuff I took out of this chapter and put it into the next, so I think it will be ready sometime next/this week (depending on when you read this).

But without further ado, here is the chapter! Enjoy!

Chapter 77: The Three Pillars

Remedios Custodio, the paladin Grandmaster, marched down the corridor leading to her Queen's private quarters. She had just managed to finish her daily routine when she was informed by her second in command, Gustav, that she had been summoned.

As any dutiful paladin she immediately set aside whatever she was doing and answered the call.

She knocked on the elegant ebony door with golden engravings on each of the angles representing the Four Gods.

“Please come in.”

The voice of the Holy Queen Calca immediately answered, lacking the usual melodic tone she often had, showing that whatever she had been summoned for would not be a pleasant matter.

Remedios might not have been the sharpest tool in the box, by her own and her sister’s admission, but she could recognize the emotional state of her Queen.

She opened the door and peeked inside, noticing how the curtains covered all the windows in the room and the only source of light were the various magical candelabras which gave the room an eerie atmosphere.

The only ones currently in the room were none other than the Holy Queen herself, and Remedios’ own sister Kelart, the High Priestess. The absence of any minister or noble did not bode well for whatever they were going to discuss.

The Grandmaster Paladin closed the door behind her and strode silently toward the table, where she sat next to her sister.

“Remedios, for the love of the Gods, you could have washed yourself before joining us... you stink like a horse.”

That was the greeting her sister gave her as she covered her nose with her handkerchief, as even the queen leaned back elegantly to not be too close to the strongest warrior of her kingdom.

Remedios felt a surge of embarrassment at her lack of decorum, she had only thought about answering the call without considering getting presentable first.

“M-my apologies!”

She stuttered out as she glanced away from her other two childhood friends.

“So, my sister’s lack of decorum aside... what have you summoned us for Calca? I doubt you set up magical barriers all over this room to discuss the weather, or any other mundane affair of the kingdom.”

Kelart questioned the queen informally, much like they did when they were still but young girls, or when they were in private like now.

“Well, you tell me Kelart.”

The queen pierced the High Priestess with a fierce gaze the likes Remedios doubted she ever saw on the angelic face of their queen.

A few tense-filled and silent seconds passed between the two of them before Calca slid Kelart a scroll across the table.

“This arrived at dawn today, I hope you can make sense of it, because no matter how I see it... I cannot make sense of it.”

The hard tone of the queen was not laced with any curiosity like the words would imply, what Remedios captured from them sounded more like suspicion, which was absurd considering how Kelart and Calca had always trusted each other fully, ever since they first became friends as young girls.

Remedios looked in silence as her sister grabbed the offered scroll as, her handkerchief completely forgotten on the side.

Minutes passed as Remedios saw her sister’s complexion get paler and paler as her eyes hardened and darted from one point of the letter to the other erratically, as if she doubted what her eyes were seeing.

It took a while before the Custodio younger sister slowly lowered the letter, her face visibly sick from the content.

“What does it say?”

Remedios could not help but ask, as her curiosity now surpassed her fear of getting in between the clearly irate queen and the sick-looking high priestess.

Kelart, on her part, did not even answer her, limiting herself to passing over the letter that Remedios immediately grabbed and began reading.

To Her Majesty, the Holy Queen of the Holy Kingdom Calca Bessarez,

His Grace Rampossa III, King of the Re-Estize Kingdom, hopes this missive finds Your Majesty in good health.

His Grace the King, writes to you with dire words in mind dictated by his grief due to the loss of his second-born daughter, Princess Alysanne.

This is in fact the main reason why this letter is addressed to Her Majesty in the first place.

Princess Alysanne's death was not the result of any accident or illness, she has, without any shadow of a doubt, been assassinated.

The ones responsible for this heinous act were none other than the Four Cardinals overseeing the Faith of the Four Gods in the Re-Estize Kingdom.

It is needless to say that the responsible had received just and well-deserved punishment, and the Faith of the Four Gods is no longer welcomed in the land under the jurisdiction of Re-Estize.

As this is a Faith-related matter we would have addressed it to the Temple of your esteemed Kingdom. But, unfortunately, in the apprehension of those directly responsible, a far greater scheme has been uncovered.

It has been revealed that the Temple of the Re-Estize Kingdom had been receiving for the longest time resources from the Temples in the Baharuth Empire and your own Holy Kingdom. Resources they had been planning to use to usurp the Royal Family and facilitate an imperial invasion or takeover.

The missive's content is unmistakable and incriminating to an extreme degree. The one who has authorized this action was none other than your Cardinal of Wind, who doubtlessly acted with the approval of the High Priestess.

As we realize that the Temples and the Royal Family are two separate entities, His Grace Rampossa III, does not consider the Holy Kingdom as a whole responsible for this heinous, reprehensible, and preposterous actions.

His Grace Rampossa III, in his magnanimous mercy, wishes for this conflict to not claim any more lives than it already has and asks for Your Majesty to immediately surrender the High Priestess to the Re-Estize Kingdom, so that she may answer for her actions against the Royal Family and assassination of a Royal Princess.

His Grace grants Her Majesty a month to answer his demands, in case these demands will be denied, or not answered, His Grace Rampossa III is ready to declare open war against the Holy Kingdom and all its allies.

So he declares.

Signed:

Rampossa III, King of the Re-Estize Kingdom

Co-signer:

Marquis Satoru, Shield of Re-Estize, Protector of the Crown

Witness:

Gazef Stronoff, Warrior Captain of Re-Estize

Remedios' eyes read the words over and over, as if her brain could simply not comprehend what her eyes were showing her. It sank in, little by little, word by word, until her rage took over and she slammed the paper back on the table with enough force to crack the wood.

“LIES! ALL LIES FROM THOSE RE-ESTIZE DOGS!”

She shouted, outraged at the sole thought anyone would have the guts to put such words on paper.

“Calm yourself, Grandmaster Custodio!”

The Queen ordered sternly, and had been anyone else, Remedios might just have ignored them, but she forced herself to swallow her words and sat back down.

“Now, Kelart, what do you have to say for yourself?”

Calca asked her friend, Remedios' eyes went wide at the thought anyone, let alone their friend, could believe such a clear lie.

“CALCA! You can't believe any of this is tr-“

“It wasn't supposed to go this way.”

The older sister's protest was interrupted by the younger sister's words, as Remedios felt her throat go dry as her wide eyes now locked on Kelart, unable to speak at her own sister admission.

Calca's eyes turned from cold hardness to pain and betrayal.

"Why... Kelart, why?... an innocent girl is dead... and a kingdom is hellbent on taking retribution for it."

The Queen's words were filled with pain and defeat.

"Calca! I swear on my life... no! On my faith, that I had nothing to do with this usurpation plan or any imperial invasion! All I did was sent resources to the Temples in Re-Estize so to slow their decline!"

Kelart swore, her hands gripping the edge of the table as though trying to steady herself from the weight of the accusations.

"Why though? What happens outside the Kingdom is none of our concern, we are always under the scrutiny of the Southern Nobility, we have already enough problems inside our kingdom. What possessed you to think interfering with other countries, and even scheming with the empire would have wrought?"

Questioned Calca desperate to make sense of her friends' actions.

"To help you, Calca! All I had done over these almost seven years, I did to make sure you remained on the throne and your reign would be one to remember for its brightness! To show the rest of the kingdom that even a Queen can be as valid as any king!"

Kelart admitted lowering her head and gritting her teeth in desperate anger.

"The southern nobility are at our throat, I managed to fend them off for years thanks to my position as High Priestess and my

influence over the Temples of the Four Gods all around the continent... we are the Holy Kingdom, the epicenter of the Faith of the Four Gods... only the Slane Theocracy could claim to revere the Gods more than us... and even then, the Faith of the Four Gods is the one spread across the continent, while the Six's influence is only internal to the Theocracy.”

Kelart continued. Words flowing out like a raging river now that the dam was broken.

“The north's power has been in decline for years now! Our trade with Re-Estize has been reduced to a third of what it was, not counting on the fact our favorable commercial treaties had been reworked over and over to make them more balanced now that Re-Estize does not rely anymore on us for magic items or food... the Temples in Re-Estize were supposed to stop this from happening, they were supposed to voice their distain and wave their influence on the people to make the nobility desists... but what did they do? What did they do when our exported goods were taxed over and over, isolating our products from entering the continental market? They did nothing! Nothing! They were too busy trying to stay afloat while being undermined on every front by that accursed magic caster!”

Kelart grasped her head with her hands, letting any pretense of composure and calm fall apart.

“I tried everything, you know?! Even treating with that monster who goes by the name of Satoru! You know was I was told by my envoys? That the kingdom was a lost cause, a place where the influence of the Gods was looked at with disdain and resentment by the people who felt betrayed by the ones who demanded coins

and faith for their services, while the people could just turn around and ask the magic caster for the same services free of charge!”

The High Priestess lamented as tears of frustrations gathered in her eyes.

“Wait! Wasn’t this magic caster an arcane one?! How does he use divine spells?”

Questioned Remedios before receiving an icy glare from her sister.

“He doesn’t, of course! No! He used his criminal organization to put under his wing and protect every dissident of the temples who did not agree with the monopolization of divine spells! And when the temple failed over and over in retaking control over the market, the people in need just turned toward those who offered what they needed cheaply, at the cost of no devotion at all.”

Kelart explained making Remedios snarl at the concept, as if those who had no devotion to the Gods deserved to bask in their gifts!

“I have gotten to my wits’ end when I received the message from the Empire... they showed concern over the decaying of the faith in Re-Estize as well, they offered me to join in supporting the Re-Estize temples to avoid further collapse till an agreement or balance could be found... I never imagined that they... that they would plan something this insane! How was I supposed to anticipate this madness?! Who in their right mind would think this was a good idea?!”

Kelart continued to rage as her grip threatened to split the table.

Calca remained silent, her face unreadable, her hands folded neatly in front of her as if she were deep in thought, or perhaps

battling with her own emotions. Remedios could hardly breathe, the understanding of this now revealed scheme clawing at her insides. They had been tricked and used like pawns by another nation, the sole thought made her feel ill.

“Kelart, you allowed them to pull you into their schemes. I trusted you more than anyone else. And now, because of your actions, an innocent girl is dead, and our Kingdom is on the brink of war.”

Calca finally spoke, her voice low but steady. The weight of her words being almost palpable.

Kelart’s face twisted with regret.

"I never wanted any of this. I didn’t want to see Re-Estize fall, and I certainly didn’t want this war. I was trying to help. I thought... I thought if I could stabilize their faith, it would keep them from putting us in an even worse position, and then we could negotiate. But they... they twisted it, they used my actions for their own purposes."

Fat tears continued to roll down her younger sister’s face, Remedios could hardly remember if she ever saw her sister in a worse state than this.

“I never... never meant to cause harm. But now... Now I see what it has led to. And I am so, so sorry.”

She faltered, her breath catching in her throat.

Remedios stood up abruptly, her fists clenched at her sides as anger and disbelief battled for dominance inside her.

“This is all the Empire’s fault! No, that magic caster started all this mess! And now they are calling for her head?! I will not stand for this!”

Her voice was a mixture of fury and sorrow as she defended her sister, her sister who had been tricked and used, the sole thought making her blood boil in her veins.

“Is there any way we can prove we had nothing to do with this scheme? To show that the only one at fault was the empire? There are no information on the letter on what they will do with them... Re-Estize must consider them at least as responsible as us... could they have sent a similar letter to the emperor? Could it be that they plan on waging war on two fronts? That would be utter madness... Re-Estize would never stand a chance in such a war.”

Calca questioned her hands linked under her chin as if she was in deep concentration.

“I am afraid... they have already concluded their business with the empire.”

Kelart’s words rang out coated with disdain and regret.

“What do you mean?”

Questioned the Holy Queen.

“The one behind the coup was none other than the Archbishop, the same Archbishop who died a few weeks before this all went down... at the time I found it strange, just a weird timing as there never were any signs of tampering I was informed of... but now, I think the emperor, or someone close to him found out and had him killed before this became an international incident... they were apparently too late to stop him, if they knew what he had planned at all, but they were quick enough to hide their dirty laundry and make it seem like the plan of a madman acting alone... the empire and Re-Estize’s relationship has improved

greatly during this last years, so I doubt this could not be resolved peacefully for them, even more now that the perpetrator is dead.”

Kelart explained their dire situation and how proving their innocence would be impossible.

In that instant something clicked in Remedios’ mind, something that she had not taken into account till that moment.

“Wait! This is all Re-Estize’s words! But who would gain more from destroying the temples?! That magic caster! He could have orchestrated everything to make it look like it was our fault!”

Both her sister and Calca looked at her with weird looks she could not understand as it all looked logical in her mind.

“While Marquis Satoru certainly gained something from all of this... killing the second princess would make no sense... she was his betrothed, his ticket to enter the royal family... if he wanted to do something like this, he should have targeted the third.. no, the first princess.”

Kelart immediately dismissed her words, but Remedios was not ready to back down.

“He did it to not seem suspicious! He could still marry the other princess!”

She continued with her theory.

“Sister, the third princess is a child, it is true he had an excuse to destroy his opposition, but he was already almost done there... it makes no sense to create such an elaborate plan to get rid off a crippled organization on the verge of collapse... not counting he would have needed to make sure the empire carried out his whims... it just doesn’t make sense.”

Kelart shook her head in dismissal but before Remedios could rebut her words Calca addressed her.

“We cannot afford to ignore the truth, Remedios. The Kingdom of Re-Estize has made its position clear. But we also cannot give them Kelart. The question now is how we navigate the storm. How we protect our Kingdom while dealing with the consequences and avoiding a war.”

The queen returned to the core of the discussion.

“I don’t think that will be an option... you see I would be prepared to offer my head if it served to settle this mess... but that would solve nothing... your rule would come to an end anyway...”

Remedios neck almost snapped as she turned toward her sister in astonishment at her declaration. The fact her sister was so ready to lay down her life was something unconceivable to her.

“What sustain the current reign are the three pillars... the Holy Queen, the jewel of our country and its beloved ruler, the Grandmaster Paladin, the symbol of absolute strength of our country and its pride, and me, the High Priestess who represents the faith and the favor of the Four Gods toward this country... let one of the pillars fall and the other two would not be able to sustain the weight of the country any longer.”

Kelart shook her head as her words sank in. Remedios had never thought of their kingdom in that way, but she had never been the greatest when it came to politics, she would rather have a target to swing her blade at, that was simple and straight to the point, just how she liked it.

“Kelart, you and Remedios are the sisters I chose in this world, regardless of blood... I would never give you up like this... even if you agreed.”

The soft voice of Calca was like a soothing melody for the heart as she took Kelart’s hands in her own as if she wanted to transmit strength to her friend.

Remedios felt a small smile grace her lips, as this was exactly why she befriended, and later chose to serve, her queen. Her benevolence was all-encompassing, she was the purest being she had ever met, only an evil being could go against such a pure woman.

“Calca...”

Kelart whispered as she clung to her friend’s hands like they were the last drops of water in a scorching desert.

“So... we go to war then?”

She asked, not knowing how else this mess could get resolved. The two women holding hands turned toward her, and she got the idea her big mouth just interrupted a moment.

“We... we should try everything we can to avoid it.”

The queen whispered, her expression downcast.

“We can still try to buy some more time, request a parley, not give them a definitive answer, let’s see if they can be swayed from this path, even at the cost of something valuable, war after all is already a loss in itself, so giving away something valuable could still be considered a victory right now.”

Kelart proposed wiping out her remaining tears from her face and trying to regain her usual composure.

“They seem hellbent on this path though. I doubt they can be swayed.”

Calca grimaced at her own words.

“We just need to imply that we are thinking about their proposal, that should manage to bring them to the negotiation table at least.”

Kelart explained much to Calca’s clear displeasure.

“That is dishonorable, little more than a trick.”

The queen protested.

“I know how you feel about it Calca, but that is the only way to buy so much needed time, and to at least try to talk this over directly.”

Kelart continued much to the queen reluctant acceptance.

“And if... nothing works?”

Calac asked bitterly, as if she just swallowed a whole lemon.

“Then we go to war, but we must make sure to fight a defensive war, we cannot be perceived as the aggressors here.”

Kelart answered the grim question with a similarly grim answer.

“Why sister? It would seem better to me to strike them first! If war is open, then a surprise attack seems the best chance we have to end this quickly.”

Remedios intervened but was silenced by a glare from her younger sister.

“Yes, that would be right under normal circumstance, but these are not normal circumstances... the southern nobles are at our throats, they have sought a reason to make Calca look

incompetent ever since she took the throne, if a war breaks out they will make themselves heard and would probably refuse to follow her into battle.”

Kelart’s words maddened Remedios to her core.

“Those damn traitors! Cowards! The lot of them!”

She spat irate at the thought of those sexist pigs.

“That is why we need to force their hand... if Re-Estize invades us, they will be forced to deploy their forces, for they cannot be seen backing down from defending the kingdom, no matter who the ruler may be, they would lose any respect from the people if they just stood there and waited as the kingdom was ravaged.”

Kelart explained calmly her plan to force the nearly rebellious nobles to cooperate.

“True, when all will be over, it will be a miracle if a civil war doesn’t break out, they will certainly not waste the occasion of condemning Calca as an incompetent ruler, they will certainly try to depose her, but we will cross that river when we come to it.”

Kelart set the matter aside for the time being.

“Then it is simply a matter of if we can win in the first place.”

Calca said as her gaze lowered.

“Of course we can win!”

Remedios intervened once more, she felt confident in saying that since, while she may not be one for politics, she was sure to know the martial power of her own nation.

“That is not what the queen meant sister, even if we win, we must make sure to not lose too many in the battle to come, otherwise

we would be open to a demi-human invasion right afterward or during the war, we cannot afford to have them invade any time soon.”

Remedios gritted her teeth at her sister’s words, in all of this she had forgotten the accursed monsters that were a constant scourge on her kingdom.

“How many men can Re-Estize even muster at the moment.”

Asked Calca curiously.

“Not more than 300.000 I would say, and I doubt they could transport via sea more than half of that.”

Kelart answered.

“Via sea? I thought they would go via land...”

Mused the queen.

“With all due respect, Your Majesty, passing through the demi-human lands would be a great risk, and they would find themselves face to face with our wall... it would be more effective to invade via sea.”

Explained Remedios and, for once, no one felt like correcting her, this must have been a first ever since she entered this room today.

“Even via sea, they would still have to contend with our fleet, which is vastly superior in numbers to what Re-Estize could muster.”

Remedios blinked at that, with all this discourse on troops she had totally forgotten about the fleet.

“Then our victory is all but assured! We will sink them before they can place a single foot on our land!”

She proclaimed enthusiastically, though her excitement didn't seem to be shared by the other two.

"I would have agreed with you a few years ago, but you forget something, or rather someone."

Kelart began as she locked eyes with her older sister.

"Marquis Satoru, the same man who started this cascade of disasters, an arcane magic caster of the 6th tier said to be equal to Fluder Paradyne."

Remedios clenched her fist at the mention of the man. She thought hating someone she never met that much was impossible before, but apparently this magic caster was proving her wrong.

"He is the major producer of magic items in the continent, if we go to war with the Re-Estize kingdom, be assured we are going to be hit by a barrage of spell the moment they enter into range... even with our superior fleet, I doubt we could stop their advance completely as they will easily be able to pierce or set fire to our ships."

Kelart grimaced.

"In that case, we would work better by trying to sneak attack them during the night, small vessels whose only objective is to sink the enemy ships when visibility is at its lowest, they can't hit us with spells if they don't see us coming."

Both Calca and Kelart nodded at her words as Remedios felt a pang of pride for her idea.

"Still, we will need to face them once they reach the shore."

Calca said as she brought two fingers to her forehead as she concentrated.

“We have around 200.000 units we can call upon, Re-Estize only has a limited number of trained warriors while the bulk of its infantry are just conscript farmers or artisans, on the other hand we of the Holy Kingdom have mandatory military training for both men and women who reach a certain age, so even in a numerical disadvantageous battle we could still come up on top using our quality over the opponent’s quantity.”

The queen reflected.

“Indeed, but the true outcome will be decided by our aces, Re-Estize has its Warrior Troop and Warrior Captain.”

Kelart laid down the enemy’s trump card, something which Remedios was sure to be able to counter.

“We of the Paladin Order outnumber them ten to one and I will be facing the Warrior Captain in single combat, I have no doubt that I will win.”

Remedios boasted ignoring Kelart shaking her head at her words.

“If it comes to it, I will be behind you to support you sister, there is no meaning in risking your life needlessly... what truly worries me is the magic caster... while we have our own divine casters, I doubt they will be capable of holding him off.”

Kelart expressed her doubts, though Remedios did not agree in the slightest with that assessment.

“Surely you jest sister, he might be powerful but we have 4th tier casters among our priests, no matter how strong-“

“He slew the White Dragon Lord in single combat, do not tell me I overestimate this man, Remedios.”

The Grandmaster's jaw almost fell on the floor at the High Priestess' words.

“W-what? W-when? H-How?”

She asked in absolute bafflement at the new information much to Kelart disappointment.

“And this is why you shouldn't miss meetings.”

Kelart lamented shaking her head at her older sister.

“Or sleep during them.”

Added Calca with a small melodic giggle much to Remedios' embarrassment.

“He slew a dragon lord more than a year ago and formed the Azerlisia Coalition, a new nation composed of Dwarves, Quagoa, and Frost Dragons.”

Kelart continued to explain as Remedios had still to recover her jaw from the floor.

“A new nation... of demi-humans?”

She asked stupidly, her disdain for such a thing nowhere to be found as the shock was too much to leave space for any other emotion.

“Exactly, I doubt we will see any of them on the battlefield, but the fact remains that we cannot afford to underestimate such a dangerous man.”

Kelart guessed.

“How about Nine Colors, could they defeat him?”

Asked Calca apprehensively.

Nine Colors were some of the greatest individuals in the kingdom, not counting the Grandmaster Paladin or the most powerful members of the Temple. They were appointed by the Queen herself and most of them were recognized for their martial strength, even though it rarely happened that some of them were appointed due to their other not-combat related talents.

“Defeat him? I am not sure as we don’t have any clue on his limits, but at least they should be capable of holding him off long enough for me and Remedios to get rid of the Warrior Captain, once he is down we will join the battle against the magic caster... at that point I doubt even he, no matter his strength, could face us all and come up on top.”

Kelart explained her plan much to Remedios’ agreement.

“Well, that is all good, but I think we got a bit too carried away by the possibility of a war we should be trying to avoid in the first place.”

Calca tried to backpedal their conversation.

"You're right, Your Majesty."

Kelart replied, her tone softening.

"We must not lose sight of the bigger picture. The war is not inevitable, and there are still avenues we can explore to avoid bloodshed. We should seek diplomacy first. Perhaps if we show Re-Estize the consequences of their actions, we may sway their decision."

Remedios, still not entirely convinced, crossed her arms.

"But how are we going to convince them that war is not the best option?"

Kelart gave her sister a thoughtful look.

"The Re-Estize kingdom is divided, Remedios. While their king may be aggressive, there are factions within their nobility that may not want war. We need to leverage those divisions. If we offer a way for them to retreat while satisfying their need for revenge, they might take it."

Calca nodded, her brow furrowing in thought.

"Yes, we need to consider every option. If we can avoid a war and prevent further destabilization of the kingdom, that would be ideal. But... I still fear it might not be enough, blind rage is probably what their king is feeling at the moment after the loss of a daughter, I fear he will hardly be agreeable."

The Holy Queen sighed heavily.

"Then, we prepare for the worst."

Kelart replied, her voice unwavering.

"We cannot rely on the hope that they will back down. Our forces must be ready, and our plan must be solid. We cannot afford to underestimate them, no matter how much we wish for peace. We must start to prepare the kingdom for war and make sure the southern nobles do not get any strange ideas in the meanwhile."

The High Priestess continued.

Remedios clenched her fists once more, her gaze determined.

"If it comes to that, I will protect this Kingdom with everything I have. No matter the cost."

Kelart's eyes softened at her sister's resolve.

"I know, Remedios. But we must make sure that it doesn't come to that. If we are to fight, we must do so with wisdom and caution, not just strength."

The room fell silent for a moment, the weight of the situation pressing down on them all. Finally, Calca spoke up, her voice calm but firm.

"Then it's decided. We begin by reaching out to Re-Estize. If negotiations fail, we prepare for war, but we do so with strategy and care. We will not rush into battle without fully understanding what we are dealing with."

The Holy Queen's voice regained the resolve Remedios had always known her for.

"Agreed."

Kelart said, her expression hardening once again.

"I will make sure to gather all the information possible on our enemies."

"And I will train more than ever to protect the people of the Holy Kingdom."

Remedios added, her voice resolute.

The queen smiled softly, her confidence in her advisors bolstered.

"Then I leave it to you two, my dearest friends. Let's hope we don't need to shed blood. But if we must, we will do so with honor."

With that, the three of them began to make their preparations. It was clear that the path ahead was uncertain, but one thing was assured, they would not face it alone. The fate of the Holy

Kingdom rested on their shoulders, and they would do whatever it took to protect it.

A.N.

And here we have it! Finally the Holy Kingdom chapter has come! I hope this gave you all much more needed perspective on what is happening, and what happened, outside of Re-Estize during and after the timeskip.

Now, I hope I characterized the characters well, I truly tried my best with the little we got about Calca and Kelart.

From my understanding Kelart is the shrewd political mind who is willing to dirty her hands when necessary since Calca would not, though I don't imagine her as a cold calculator like Renner or Jircniv.

Calca on the other hand was a little trickier as she is said to be a pure soul who despise dishonorable and underhanded methods, and while I took this in account I also imagine she would not be a fool and would be aware of the political spectrum she finds herself in. Not being willing to do something "dishonorable" doesn't mean being unaware of what happens around you after all.

As for Remedios, even if a few of you might think I am overestimating her mental capacity, I truly think the Overlord community has it out for her far too much than she deserves. I mean, she is no genius of course, but she is still skilled when it comes to martial and military matters. She might not be a great strategist but with brainstorming partners like Kelart and Calca I believe even she could give some positive input (not that she refrains from spouting a lot of bullshit as I

showed). In canon she is alone and completely desperate, with no one she trusts to advice her or exchange ideas with, so I imagine most of her mistakes where due to this and her general common lack of sense.

Well, I think I rambled long enough, I will be seeing you very soon!

So, stay safe! Till next time!