

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Hey, early chapter? Is this a prank! No! I just need to take a flight tomorrow and I didn't want to let you all with nothing!

Well, I don't want to say anything more, just enjoy!

Chapter 90: What remains when the Fairytale Dies

Celicia was scared, more than she had ever been in her life, more than when she messed up and her parents punished her, more than when her instructor threatened to break her legs if she couldn't run faster, more than when she saw enemies and allies tear each other apart like bloodthirsty wolves.

She was scared, and she wasn't even in danger... and yet, that dread was somehow even worse than if she was. And for all her mind kept screaming there was nothing to fear, her body could not compute that simple fact, for reality was far grimmer than it appeared to the veiled eye.

"Here you are boy, if you intend to throw yourself, I would suggest a better place... those rocks down there won't ensure a swift death."

Celicia would have recoiled at the words if she wasn't frozen in place by fear already.

There was something so wrong in all of this. Even if Climb was barely responsive, even if he had no weapons on him, she could not help but feel like the boy had never been as dangerous as now.

“Fuck off...”

The words whipped the tense air cutting deep through it.

“You should not be out of bed with a leg and arm in those conditions... the healer told you to rest.”

The blond boy didn't answer the man, letting the pregnant pause grow between them.

“You think she would want this? Do you think she died so you could jump-“

Celicia barely caught with her eyes the shining metal darting toward Kurz' face even if the man had no problem grabbing the sharp knife midair, just a few centimeters from his face.

“Don't you fucking dare speak of her.”

Celicia felt the animalistic instinct to run as fast as she could, like a doe spotted by a wolf, as the boy turned around, trying to stand on his injured and still trembling bandaged leg. A sight that should have been pitiful, filled her with unimaginable dread... those eyes, those soulless dry eyes that belonged on a beast rather than a human made her wish she was anywhere but here.

“You don't have the right to speak of her... not a coward like you who chose to abandon his team to save his own skin.”

For the first time, Celicia saw how those words affected their leader, his muscles tensing and lips curling. She was not sure what to think of it though, on one hand, Climb had a right to have his grievances, on the other, Kurz had half of his ribs broken and

rather than come back just to die, decided to call for help, even though that left them to the mercy of that blonde monster.

“And for your information, I am not going to throw myself down there... no, I have something else to do first...”

The boy limped past them grunting in effort as he dragged his half-healed leg behind him.

“And what is that boy?”

Kurz asked as he stopped the young man by grabbing his shoulder as he passed by him.

The blue-eyed teen turned toward the older man as an ugly light darted through his eyes, telling a tale of rage and madness without the need for words.

“But to gut that bitch of course... I won’t die till I see the life disappear from her eyes as she gasps for mercy hanging from her own entrails...”

The girl shivered, not at the gruesome description to which she had been desensitized along the years, but at the conviction and pleasure oozing from each of his words.... Never had she heard the boy ever sound passionate about anything, let alone eager... and to hear that tone from him, accompanied by such words... was disturbing on a level she had yet to experience, and one she would rather not have had the displeasure of experiencing.

“Give it up boy, I told you, she is dead... you saw the crater, she got blown up to smithereens.”

Something ugly made its way on the boy’s face, a scowl more adapt to a demi-human’s face than a human’s.

“The hell she is... there is no corpse, she is alive... and I am going to find her!”

The boy spat between clenched teeth.

“Boy... Climb, you are fifteen, you have your entire life before you... you already amassed enough coin to last you a decade and... according to Edstrom’s will, she left everything to you... that is enough to set you up for a comfortable rest of your life.”

That surprised Celicia, not the fact the young woman had a will, after all everyone in the Black Hand had to write a will before joining seeing the dangers affiliated with their jobs. She too had filled it in, leaving everything to her big sister. Still, she did not expect the woman to leave everything to Climb. They have always looked like the extrovert and broody pair of friends in her eyes... but maybe, there was something more going on between them?

“Mind your own business, and make yourself useful by finding some traces of that bitch.”

Climb spat as he shrugged off the man’s hand as he limped away.

“No, you are done... no more jobs for you.”

The cold words of the man seemed, for the first time, to have an effect on the boy as he stopped abruptly in his steps. He turned around, his expression unreadable.

“What did you say?”

Celicia felt like cowering at the freezing cold tone of the young man which seemed a millimeter away from snapping.

“I said you are done... you are not in any condition to keep working in this line of work, nor have you the Talent, I already

asked for your reassignment to a border village... find yourself a village girl and live a happy life..."

Silence descended for a second before Climb, despite his barely working leg, dashed toward Kurz, unsheathing a blade he was hiding in his sleeve.

The blond man didn't even bother to unsheathe his own weapon as he just swatted the blade away, and used his leg to unbalance the boy making him fall on his face.

"I will avoid mentioning this, just stay down and reflect on your actions..."

With that said, the man grabbed Celicia's shoulder, forcing her away from the downed boy.

"COME BACK HERE! YOU PIECE OF SHIT! COME BACK HERE AND FIGHT ME! YOU BASTARD!"

She shut her eyes in fear as she heard the boy's shouts from behind her. The rage, desperation, and pain mixing to create a voice worthy of a monster from her mother's tales.

"RRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!"

The animalistic roar of frustration assaulted her ears like sharp, freezing-cold knives.

"It's alright, don't look back."

She felt the hand on her shoulder increase the strength of its grip in a reassuring way.

"W-will he be f-fine?"

She found the strength to ask in a whisper. For all she was scared, the boy currently crying his lungs out on the ground was still someone she had spent more than a year working with.

“I will have someone sent for him.”

The blond said without hesitation.

“But why? W-why did you have to make him mad?”

She saw his expression morph into something she did not understand, sadness, frustration, or regret... or a mixture of all three, she couldn't say.

“I... augh.... Once...”

For once the usually affable man didn't seem to know how to approach the subject.

“Fuck it... I was once like that, full of rage and a beastly desire to hurt... I am not proud of my actions and I wish I could make up for some of what I did... that boy has suffered enough, I want to try and avoid him using that wrath of his to rip apart innocent lives... himself included.”

The girl didn't answer, she didn't know what to say to that, Kurz has never hidden his more brutal side, but she found it difficult to believe he had ever been similar to the boy behind her.

Still, for all it hurt her, she had to think of herself... of her family. And so, she pushed down any guilt or pity she had for the boy and didn't look back as his desperate and wrathful cries got further and further away.

{Ro-Lente's Castle}

{Renner's P.O.V.}

The Third Princess of Re-Estize sipped her tea with gusto. Not because of the delightful flavor she used to enjoy, but because this torturous wait has finally ended for good.

In all her life, she had never felt such uncertainty and fear, the thought of her Satoru being away from her for so long... it made her sick, she could hardly keep down her food, many times refusing to eat altogether.

She missed his voice, his gentle touch, his smell, his presence by her side... it was like the world had gone empty all of a sudden, and she was left to linger like an enduring ghost in a land of death.

When she saw the army return, she only had eyes for one figure. Oh, how she wanted to run down into the streets and jump on him to cuddle and be melted in his embrace, to feel that burning loving passion be rekindled in her heart after months of absence, to take in his smell as if she had been suffocating for an eternity and his smell was like a breath of life for her soul.

But she had to resist her primal instincts, it just would not have done... not yet, which is why she was impatient to leave her rooms when the storm passed, and her life was allowed to come back to what it was.

Her feelings aside, everything has gone mostly according to plan, she had expected the three foolish women to be captured and executed on a later date with a trial, but their foolishness and Satoru's cunning ensured a swifter and preferable end to the alternative.

Though, she knew that a large part of the merit also went to someone who only recently entered her service and, like the dog he was, was eager to prove his usefulness to her and her cause.

Knocks from her door interrupted her train of thought as her usual polite smile made its way on her face. ‘Speak of the devil and he shall appear’ she could not help but use that adapt expression Satoru taught her with one of his tales.

“Do come in.”

She said dispassionately. She really wanted to get this over with and return to her love.

The man slipped in silently, his expression showing her would rather be anywhere else but here.

The man didn’t even bother sitting down, choosing instead to go on one knee in front of her, much to her amusement. There was something cathartic in seeing one of your most valiant opponents completely capitulate and submit to her. It was an unexpected thrill, and probably the reason behind the nobility’s obsession over power. But that was just a fleeting and insignificant amusement if compared to the blazing inferno that was her feelings of love only one man could elicit in her.

“You have done a fine job my fox, to infiltrate the hen of fools so easily... tell me, did they flock to you like the headless chickens they are?”

Like any good comedian, she was eager to know if her preparations were going as expected for the final act of her tragedy.

“Yes, they are eager to flock under the wing of their rooster in hope of reclaiming what was lost, not realizing the rooster himself is non the wiser.”

He replied emotionlessly. He never made a mystery of his lack of enthusiasm regarding his new task, though, she couldn’t care less

about what he liked and what he didn't like, and he knew that if he wanted what she offered then he would have to comply regardless of his feelings on the matter.

“The political field has grown a bit stale, don't you think? The newly born minor noble faction will make for a nice addition to the game, wouldn't you say?”

An indescribable light passed through the man's eyes, as if he just partially realized what she meant to do. Took him long enough.

She laid back on her chair, her cup of tea forgotten on the table as she looked down at the kneeling man who was paling at an alarming rate.

“Now, now, you wouldn't want to back down now... you have done such a good job till now, establishing yourself as the backbone of the resistance against Marquis Satoru and that Witch of a Princess...”

She continued, amusement overflowing from every word. For all it was entertaining to make the fool squirm, she also knew to keep it short.

“You have managed the task well, making those foolish girls from the now disbanded Holy Kingdom believe they stood a chance... even though you missed to mention the second batch of assassins sent, but Satoru sends his thanks for letting a new addition to his forces fall right into his lap, so no hard feelings there.”

She raised her finger to stop any excuses or protest from the man.

“Consider the matter closed and settled, Satoru found no issue with it, so consider it a minor oversight.”

It seems like the matter had been disturbing him quite a lot. As it should, seeing how such an overview would have culminated in a massive loss if it wasn't for the fact the target was her perfect Satoru.

Silence persisted, the man waiting for her to continue, like a good, whipped dog who just avoided punishment should.

“You shall return to your post as agreed, manage your territory well now that the hands no longer binds your movement... though, try avoiding overstepping your newly found freedom, my fox, I would hate to have to hear you have been... inconveniencing associates of mine.”

The message was clear enough, the leash might have gotten longer, but the collar was still tight around his neck.

“I will oblige to Her Majesty's commands.”

That was all the man uttered. It was so unlike him to be so curt considering how often he used his sharp tongue to whisper the right thing into the right ear, or to push divide and diffidence where there was collaboration. He seemed completely cowed but she knew better than to trust a fox with chicken eggs.

“As for your reward, Satoru will contact you soon, so do not make yourself scarce in the days to come...”

For the first time she saw the kneeling man fidget in place. The mention of his so-much desired reward making him finally react in some way.

“Now leave me, I have no further use of you for now.”

She dismissed the man with a wave of her hand, not even dignifying him with a last glance.

As she savored her tea, she heard the man rise and walk away. She placed the cup down just when he was right at her room's doorstep.

“Oh, and Marquis... you have a really cute son, cherish him as much as you can.”

Renner could swear she heard the clenched teeth of the marquis crack before he left her room closing the door with more force than required, but not to the point of slamming it, he was a noble with manners after all.

The soon-to-be teenager giggled at the masquerade temper tantrum of the man. For all he could act mad and indignant, they both knew who held the knife in their relationship. She could have him ruined a hundredfold with just a meeting with her father, not counting what Satoru himself could do, not that Renner would ever disturb him with such frivolities.

Speaking of which, she had to bathe and prepare for tomorrow. She would finally get to see her beloved flame again, after so many months of them being apart, after he missed her twelfth birthday... which he had to make up for, but she was sure she would not be disappointed.

After all, she was pretty sure Satoru could not possibly be caught unaware by now.

{Satoru's Mansion}

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

The marquis sighed heavily as he closed the door of his mansion behind him, it was late afternoon and, much to his delight and appreciation, Hilma had already dismissed all the servitude.

Truly, that woman knew him too well, to the point she sometimes seemed to understand him better than he understood himself.

The only other woman in his life who ever came close to that was his own mother, which was an unfair comparison seeing how she gave birth to him and he had barely been a teenager when she passed away.

It had been since her death that he had not been able to call a place home, not for real, for all he inherited the apartment he and his mother lived in, he never felt like it was a home after her death, just a empty box devoid of the warmth such a place should have and filled with lingering ghosts of past memories and regrets.

This mansions on the other hand, for all it was pompous and grand, and unlike something he would like, still felt like home on a level he had almost forgotten over the years, and it was strange he didn't realize it till this very moment were he had returned after leaving for so long not on his whim but forced on what could be called business. It was almost like coming home after having an extremely long day at work, only amplified a hundredfold.

He marched through the silent halls, if he knew his friend well enough, there were few places where she could be, and considering the garden was empty, the short list got reduced to three.

He would start from the most obvious, her personal study where she spent most of her time working. And, as expected, he was welcomed by a warm and cozy room as soon as he entered, the magical fire making sure the temperature remained stable the whole time it was on.

Exactly as he expected his friend was behind her desk, which was strangely devoid of papers, a first in his memory, except for the moment they had it transported into the room. What was less expected, but not surprising, was the presence of the second masked figure sitting on the sofa, her tattered red cloak nowhere to be found, giving him a free show to her gear, which was not a first, but still a rare occasion.

“Welcome home, Satoru.”

The warm voice of Hilma welcomed him, but somehow managed to sound some alarm bells in his mind, though he could not understand why such a thing would happen, her tone seemed normal, what he expected from her, and yet, something was not right.

“I’m home, Hilma.”

His Japanese mannerism took over as he defaulted to his basic salaryman settings, trying to shake off that strange sensation.

The blonde masked caster waved at him, in what he interpreted as a salute which he answered in kind before passing her and seating opposite the blonde de facto leader of Seven Hands.

“it has been a long few weeks, so I hope I won’t find the papers missing from your desk on my own.”

His joke seemed to have lightened the mood as Hilma gave him a sly smile.

“I will let you remain doubtful till you check for yourself... after all, I deserve a little bit of revenge for the crap you constantly put me through.”

Satoru could not really deny her words as, much to his chagrin, he was indeed too quick in delegating the most troublesome matters to Hilma, though, in his defense, she did not lack the personnel.

“I hope you had fun at least since I was stuck here dealing with both our loads of work and the additional load of the war... speaking of which, congratulations on becoming officially a war hero.”

He sighed heavily at her sarcastic delivery. He really didn't want to remember that return parade he had to participate to as if he was some grand heroic figure to be acclaimed... He would have gladly skipped it, plus he was sure Ulbert would have caused a scene at the sight of him like that.

“Don't remind me, that was worse than the war...”

His tone was as dispassionate as it could get.

“I guess that is just you being yourself... despite the reputation of your kind...”

He didn't exactly know what she meant by that, maybe she was referring to nobles in general or maybe caster? No, nobles seemed far more likely of an option.

“I guess I am just built different.”

He tried to return the playful banter, only receiving a mysterious sly smile from the violet-eyed woman.

“I heard you adopted a few strays along the way... it's quite like you to pick up people out of nowhere like they were mushrooms, but I am curious... knowing you, you must have plundered the treasury... were there any interesting items from Ygdrazil?”

Well, yes, he actually scouted the treasury, but there wasn't anything to write home about.

“No, the only thing of note was this war the Paladin Comma-“

He stopped in his track as his relaxed and already tired mind fully computed what Hilma asked him even with her butchered pronunciation.

The room fell silent as no one uttered another word for what seemed to be an eternity.

“It's a shame then, I hoped you would find something that reminded you of home... or something left by a Player like you.”

Satoru did not react to the woman's words, his mind was completely scattered all over the place, half-formed ideas were being juggled around as he was trying to understand what was happening... and if he was in danger, preposterous as it sounded.

And then, a wave of familiar and uncomfortable coldness washed over him, freezing his thoughts in place so he could regain control over his panicking mind.

Hilma knew about Yggdrasil, she knew about him being a Player, and he could only speculate on what else she might have known right now.

But the real question was, how?

Was there a third unknown party who made a move and somehow managed to glimpse under his well-crafted façade? Who were they? What did they want? How much they knew?

No, wait, he should not panic again... he needed to stay logic.

The metaphorical cogs in his head turned at maximum speed as he analyzed every detail he was aware of right now... and then it

hit him. They were not alone in this room... there was another... someone that has always been partially mysterious both in origin and knowledge.

His head slightly turned so that he could glance at the short magic caster with the corner of his eye. The masked face of Evileye stared back at him in an eternal stalemate.

“I guess there is no more sense in denying reality once the cat is out of the bag.”

Satoru finally broke his silence.

“Should we drop the masks... or do you still enjoy your fairytales?”

The blonde caster spoke for the first time with some mirth in her tone which managed to put Satoru even more on edge somehow.

“Ladies first.”

He rebutted automatically as the blonde visibly sighed and without hesitation removed her signature white mask with black markings, revealing a pale young-looking visage with blood crimson eyes he immediately recognized as he saw them many a time back in Yggdrasil and on a certain NPC.

‘A vampire’ the thought came to him naturally, quite surprised at this point to come face to face with another undead in so long.

“And who exactly are you, Miss Evileye?”

Surprisingly, that question came from the violet-eyed woman who did not react surprised in the slightest at the revelation, implying she had already seen what he was seeing right now.

“I thought you were supposed to be on my side here.”

The petite caster protested with a pout who only emphasized her young-looking face.

“I am on no one’s side, I may still be mad at Satoru for keeping secrets... but you are not exempt from your own lies.”

The vampire soon yielded at those words just shaking her head with a sigh.

“Fair enough... I am Evileye, formerly a member of the Thirteen Heroes, and also the one who was known once as Landfall.”

The blonde caster introduced herself. Satoru couldn’t say he wasn’t surprised, to think some of the heroes from two-hundred years ago were still around... and he also heard of that other name, if he didn’t remember wrong, it was the name given to a great calamity which happened around the same period.

But now, it was his turn, he already casted both anti-information magic and anti-teleportation magic around himself, so, at worst he would just have to battle the caster... something he would still try to avoid. Not only for the damage such a battle would cause... but also due to the relationship they had come to form over the year they had lived together.

His gloved hand rose in the air as he slipped off his own mask, the heat of the room finally making contact with the bones of his skull directly. His red dots didn’t leave the crimson vampiric pair of eyes even for an instant as a mixture of unspoken emotions passed through them.

“I am Satoru, an undead who was unwillingly transported to this world.”

His introduction was swift and to the point, making sure he did not reveal any more information about himself than they already possessed.

“I see, I should have guessed that the most probable answer was an undead... considering my own nature.”

He had little time for her musings, if he really was going to take advantage of his Emotional Suppression and its calming effect, he needed to do it before it wore off.

“I can guess you have been sent here to spy on me.”

He stated as a matter of fact, not even considering the chance she might have had other intentions at this point.

“In part, yes, but most of all, I was sent to assess your nature... and origin.”

Evileye did not hesitate in confirming his assessment.

“Who sent you?”

He knew it was a foolish question to ask a spy, and yet, even lies could tell much... and in the worst case scenario, he could always try to get an answer through Domination Magic, after all, she was still an undead, skin or not.

“Rigrit Bers Caurau, another member of the Thirteen Heroes... and the same old hag who gave that blonde brat that blade... which, by the way, belonged to another member long deceased.”

It was a believable explanation, but still, he had no intention of taking it at face value, that was the way of the fool, but before he could inquire more, Evileye continued.

“But she is just a middleman, the one who really sent her is the Platinum Dragon Lord, the self-proclaimed guardian of this world... and someone who hates your kind with a passion.”

If he had eyes, they would be as wide as dinner plates right now. He had no idea such a being even existed, not that he had researched Dragon Lords much, something he would have to rectify, but still... what the hell?

“So, he has a grudge against undead?”

He realized he said something foolish the moment Evileye glanced at him with a stare that screamed, are you an idiot?

“Players.”

She clarified, the sole word making Satoru uneasy at the fact this was knowledge other beings possessed. In his defense, in his eyes, it was extremely weird to treat every Yggdrasil Player as if they were the same race, but he guessed that to this world, it kind of made sense.

“And how do you know about Players... and Yggdrasil?”

He asked, pushing aside every other question about this Dragon Lord in order to understand how some individuals came to know of his nature.

“The leader of the Thirteen Heroes was a Player.”

She revealed, again without a moment of hesitation, confirming a theory of his saying that some of the heroes were players in the process.

“He told us about your lands... or worlds, as he called them... of the world of Yggdrasil and its powerful and war-hungry inhabitants.”

The vampire continued much to Satoru's ire. Whoever that Player was, he was a fool, to reveal such information to those who could one day stand against him.

"How did your leader die?"

He questioned, eager to know if this fool was still around so he might hunt him down and silence him before he revealed any more information on Yggdrasil or, even worse, Ainz Ooal Gown.

This time around Evileye did not answer immediately, as cowl making its way on her face, and old anger resurging to the surface from the depths of her soul.

"In an ambush, he was struck down by the Platinum Dragon Lord who had masqueraded as a member of the Thirteen Heroes using his ability to transfer his consciousness in an armor."

Well, that was good news at least, one less idiot to deal with and he also got some information on what this Dragon Lord could do.

"Do you know why he seems to hold such a hatred for Players?"

The Overlord questioned, curious to know something more he could use as an advantage, after all information was power.

The blonde just shrugged her shoulders before speaking.

"I don't know if there is a specific reason but I can imagine... the Eight Greed Kings were Players most probably, and they are the reason why Dragon Lords are almost extinct as a race and their arrival signed the end of their dominion over the continent as the ultimate powerhouses."

Satoru nodded along to her explanation. It wasn't far fetched to think this Dragon Lord held a grudge since then, he might have lost family in that war.

In a sense it reminded him of the stories of the old veterans from the third world war of his old world, the level of hatred they had for their enemies at the time was something legendary, and seeing how nuclear warheads were used against the population, he could not really blame those who still burned with hatred even decades after the fact.

He tried to shake those thoughts out of his mind, this was not the time to lose himself in memories.

“I see... you have been... very forthcoming.”

For all he was usually skeptical or paranoid, he could hardly detect a lie in her words, she didn't hesitate and answered his question in a concise and clear way. So, while unspoken, he could not help but question such actions.

“You should thank Hilma, she is the one who convinced me to do this.”

If Satoru had eyelids, he would have blinked. He was so absorbed in his own conjectures and the conversation that he almost forgot that they were not alone.

He turned back toward the violet-eyed ex-prostitute which he met in an alley years before, someone he came to rely on and consider one of his closest friends.

“Don't misunderstand, I am still mad at you... and you will have to answer my questions later.”

The blonde woman regarded him with a hard stare which easily melted after her initial harshness. She laid her slender hand on his gloved one.

“But still, Player or no Player, from this world or from another... I know you, Satoru, and I know you are someone who does not seek the same path as those who came before you... You are still the same gentle soul who took pity on a prostitute in an alley, who saved the life of a dying boy just because he could, who looked beyond the appearance and prejudice of those around you... someone capable of great kindness and also great fury to those who deserve it... but I never saw you strike someone down for the sake of killing them, nor for the enjoyment of the act, yet I saw you do so to protect.”

Satoru might have been an undead, his Emotional Suppression might have been still lingering, and yet... those words still gave him pause. He had never considered himself a just paladin and protector of the weak... that was not him, he had always thought of himself as an egotistical man, and he accepted that.

So why? Why did those words seem to inflame his spirit so? As if he felt pride in the fact someone had such a consideration of him?

Even back in Ainz Ooal Gown, he had always strived to be the best Guildmaster he could, to be the middle-ground and the one everyone could rely on... and still, he never felt the need to be acknowledged for that... he didn't think it would have even mattered.

But now, those praises, those words, the admission that someone he cared for had such an opinion of him... it warmed his nonexistent heart like few things ever did.

Had he always wished for this? Even when he had tried to be an example and help Renner? Even when he had encouraged Lakyus

to be her own person? Even when he strived to make Rayne and Arche the best versions of themselves?

Could it be, that behind all the egotistical reasons he told himself... in the end he just wanted to be acknowledged? To make sure he mattered for someone?

What even would have been the sense in a life where he was no one? Just a lingering ghost marching through endless eras, immortal and unnoticeable... what kind of existence would that be?

Without even noticing, he enveloped the woman's hand in his own.

"I feel like you have a far better opinion of me than I deserve... but still, I thank you Hilma, for everything that you are."

He had never been good with words, but he felt like those feelings should be expressed this way, and judging by the unshed tears in the corners of the woman's eyes, his feelings have been received.

"Look at you two, if you ignore me any longer, I might start to get jealous."

The one to interrupt the moment was none other than the now unmasked vampire who placed herself on the desk between him and Hilma.

For all his previous tension had melted, he could still not completely relax around the now revealed ex-hero.

"For all I have been interested in everything you had to say, and am still grateful for your sincerity... I must still ask, why are you betraying your old comrades?"

For all the vampire had parted with secret information quite easily, she did not seem to want to part with her own reasons quite as easily. A heavy sigh finally escaped the blonde caster's lips as her expression darkened in a mixture of resentment and sadness.

“Comrades? I might have once called them so... apparently my feelings were not reciprocated... what kind of comrade only seeks you out when they need something? What kind of comrade backstab each other when they had watched each other's backs till the previous day? What kind of comrade... let his friends rot in loneliness for two-hundred years?”

The young-looking vampire almost spat those last words like they were the foulest of venoms.

“I have leached off you, I have been a nuisance, hell... I started by threatening the life of Hilma... and yet, you all did not cast me out, you even indulged my curiosity... you never pushed me away, nor did you seek me out only at your convenience... you never asked anything of me, even though I am capable of much.”

She continued, her tone now calmer, even tranquil as she turned toward Satoru.

“You might come from the same place as those who came before... but you never sought conquest, nor senseless violence, nor worship as a god... no matter what other say, to me your existence is not a detriment to this world, if anything, you have done your best to better it somehow... and also, you are protecting someone very dear to me.”

The last words were mumbled under her breath and he was only capable of hearing them due to his enhanced senses.

Satoru could not help but agree with her, those were not comrades by any definition. He could not even think that anyone from Ainz Ooal Gown would ever behave in such a way toward each other, not even those more antagonistic.

And if Evileye wanted a comrade, a true comrade, he could give her one, and Hilma too.

Maybe, maybe it was time for him to find new comrades too... after all these years, before and after his arrival into this world... maybe the only thing he needed was a companion, or more than one.

A.N.

Okay, I don't think anyone expected this chapter to be such a bomb considering we have just come out of a pretty intense arc. And yet, I have been waiting to write this for at least ten chapters.

I think that now we are done with the prologue of this story... jokes aside, in a narrative sense this is very much similar to the final episode of season 1 of Vinland Saga if any of you watched that peak show.

As for Evileye's development, I have been pushing her character for the last 2 arcs for her to finally come out of her shell and try to find happiness once more after 200 years of misery and loneliness. Since Satoru is not Ainz I very much believe that her shift (overtime) was only natural, with Hilma playing a quite large role in her coming around. Poor girl needs a hug.

Satoru has been more tricky, I really think that Hilma's version of him is not really mirroring reality, but neither is

Satoru's own version of himself, after all he is not an extremely logical and heartless being as he demonstrated many times by indulging Renner, Lakyus, Rayne, Arche, etc... many things could have been dealt it more easily if he never took in account their feelings on it, but he always avoided stepping over them if it was possible, showing a softer side to his undead nature (very much like he did for the NPC in canon, even though I believe this is more powerful than that since this is born of genuine affection and not relishing in old memories of his past friends). So I very much believe the true Satoru is in the middle of these two visions of him.

Well, I am eager to hear everything you have to say about this, I imagine you guys will go wild with theories on what will happen or reactions to what happened.

Let me know with a comment / review!

Stay safe! Till next time!