

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

The arc's final chapter is finally here! And boy! It is also the longest chapter of the whole story! Sorry for the slight delay but I unfortunately had to attend to a medical emergency (not for me) and kind of didn't manage to proofread it in time.

Still, hope you enjoy! Have a nice read! And thanks to all those who chose to support this work, you are partially responsible for giving life to this story!

THIS CHAPTER HAS NOT BEEN BETAED YET! (I will upload the betaed chapter as soon as I get it!)

Chapter 63: Just Myself and nothing more

“So, you are telling me, you manage to cast your spells by focusing the necessary amount of mana around your body?”

Asked a perplexed Arche as Vulmitar only nodded in confirmation.

“Wow, that sounds like a very easy way to take your opponent by surprise... imagine managing to shoot magic in the desired direction without having to use your hands!”

Added Rayne as his green eyes began to shine with excitement.

“Can humans even do that?”

Rebutted Arche in a doubtful tone.

“I mean, if that could be possible, wouldn’t it have come up in hundreds of years of magical study?”

She asked but Rayne did not back down from his idea.

“That is because they have always circled around the same ideas and dogmas all this time, without ever bothering trying to understand how other species approached magic!”

Those words gave Arche pause as she actually pondered the theory.

“You... might have a point there... like Master Satoru said, magic is an ever-changing science that adapts to its environments.”

She quoted as a pensive expression appeared on her face. On his part Rayne almost choked as he gaped at the blonde caster.

“Wow... I had no idea the day would ever come when you would realize how good my ideas are!”

He teased prompting the blonde caster to snap out of her pensive state and punch the boy’s shoulder.

“Shut up, you idiot!”

She huffed.

Vulmitar just observed the duo banter and bounce ideas off of each other, it wasn’t the first time such a thing happened, no, this had been a repeating show for the last few days they have been together.

They have gotten to know each other after he first escorted them to the royal palace’s library. He showed them where the best

books on magic were and he thought that would be it. Instead, he had been dragged down by them as they asked many questions about both the library and his magic.

They inquired about how he learnt and how he practiced. In exchange he asked questions of his own regarding their own studies and techniques. Before he knew it, hours had passed and the meeting between the three races had concluded.

“What do you think Vulmitar? I am right, am I not?! I can totally learn to cast spell like you do!”

The brown-haired human known as Rayne took him out of his thoughts bringing him back to the current discussion.

“Vulmitar! Tell this dolt he is too stupid to manage such a thing!”

The blonde caster, Arche, interjected as she sported a light blush on her cheeks.

They both were waiting expectantly for him to break the tie. Which had been kind of a constant as of late, as the two argued often enough on magic and other things. Vulmitar at first thought that they were about to come to blows, as most of his family resolved any type of conflict by beating up their opponent regardless of the argument’s points. But then they surprised him when one or the other backed down once they were provided with enough evidence to shut down their point.

“Are you even listening?”

Rayne protested as he stomped his foot on the ground while glaring at Vulmitar. The dragon almost felt like laughing at the sight. Not out of any malice of course, just.. being treated like he was part of their little group of magic enthusiasts made him feel... good... better than any of his previous relationships ever did.

“Uhm... I am not sure as I never heard of your type of casting before, but I guess trying would not hurt?”

He tried to settle the matter midway, as he often did every time the two argued.

“See, I told you!”

Rayne proudly declared as if he won the argument.

“Do you have your ears up your arse?! That is not what he said!”

The blonde vehemently protested.

This time around Vulmitar could not repress a chuckle he tried to masquerade as a cough.

“Tsk! You know what?! Do it! Learn to spew some lightning from your mouth, gods forbid you may be more silent!”

The blonde continued as she crossed her arms with a mischievous smile on her face.

“Humph! Always better than spitting fireballs out of the ass like someone did months ago!”

The boy retorted with a smirk of his own as the blonde caster blushed profusely.

“S-shut up! T-that was due to some s-spoiled thing I accidentally a-ate!”

She protested but the boy did not relent.

“Sure, it was not at all due to you having three portions of my mother’s cake.”

He rebutted casually avoiding a swing from Arche.

Vulmitar decided to lie down for now, who knew when those two would be done? He really wanted to ask them about an idea he had for a spell... well, he guessed he could still ask them later.

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

Lakyus relaxed against a wall as she looked a mix of Quagoa and dwarves scurrying around as piles of rocks were removed from the spot they had dropped the ceiling onto the Frost Dragons.

She felt like a weight she had no idea was there was just lifted from her shoulders. She felt so light and yet, she had still one duty to carry out.

The young knight sighed as she waited for the arrival of her self-appointed knight. Leinas had been a special sort of companion, very much silent but her presence had become a source of comfort over the time. Spending a year and a half together may not be a big deal for most, but for someone as young as Lakyus, it had been one tenth of her life spent with this person... and now it was time to say goodbye.

'Saying goodbye is the hardest thing to do especially when goodbye is not what you want' she never thought much about the saying she read somewhere, but now she realized how true that statement rang.

She was grateful for all the help she provided, for being her confidant, for putting up with her antics, and for sticking up with her even when the situation got very hot. If it was for Lakyus, she would gladly have Leinas by her side for the rest of her life, but that was wrong, she had no intention of chaining up someone, each of them had the right to live the life they wished for.

She heard steps coming her way as she steeled herself for the discussion that had to happen.

“Lady Lakys, you wished to see me?”

The older blonde knight asked, as politely as always.

“Stop with that Lady thing, will you? Now you don’t even have an excuse for it anymore.”

Lakys said as she tried to not sound as downcast as she felt. She would rather stick with the title for the rest of her life than do this.

Leinas just quirked her eyebrow, giving the younger girl a confused look.

“Your oath has been fulfilled, you have saved my life, twice I would add, you have no longer any obligations or debts toward me, you are free to go and live your life as you wish.”

Those words flowed out of her mouth like an avalanche, after the first it had been hard to stop. There were so many emotions she wanted to express, so many things she wanted to say. But that was it, she would not weaponize her feelings to guilt trip Leinas in staying or anything else.

The older woman did not speak a word for what seemed to be an eternity in Lakys’ mind.

“I see, my service has ended, the debt honored...”

She finally spoke as her mind did not seem to have realized that yet.

“Don’t look so surprised, I never felt like there was a debt to begin with... but thank you, thank you for always being by my side and covering my back.”

‘Damn, it gets harder with every word’ Lakyus thought as she continued to put up a smile even as she felt like a familiar feeling was crawling up from the depths of her stomach.

“What are you going to do now?”

Asked the blonde imperial noble, making Lakyus grateful for the change of topic.

“I... well, I thought I could get into becoming an adventurer... I mean, I saw what happened here... and if I want to achieve my goal I can’t count on Renner or Satoru to always be there to help me, or cover up my mess.”

She sighed as she gave voice to her idea. Of all the many things she has learned through this voyage, one of the most important was how much having public recognition and influence would go a long way to give credence and weight to your opinions.

When she was an immature girl in the empire, she once declared how ruling through power was wrong. And that was still true in her mind, but power could also be wielded to make your voice louder, to back your words with your ability to go through with them.

“What of the Quagoa leader? You did swore to guard him.”

Lakyus felt a tinge of embarrassment rise as she actually did not think about that details as she thought she would let Riyuro go wherever he wanted as long as he promised to not return to the Azerlisia mountains.

“Well... I mean, he could do his own thing in the meantime... it’s not like I am his jailor or something... though, if he wanted to lend a hand, I would not be opposed.”

For a moment she imagined forming an adventuring team with Riyuro. She was not going to lie, that sounded very neat. She would ask him, there was no harm in doing so after all, worse thing that could happen was him saying no.

“What about you Leinas? What are you going to do from now on?”

She bounced the question back on the older woman. Leinas stood there, silent, then she fell back. It was so sudden Lakyus feared for a moment she had lost her balance, but she just sat down.

“H-Hey! What’s wrong?! Are you okay?!”

She asked in panic as she bowed down to get to Leinas’ height.

“How can you be this way?”

Those words hit Lakyus like a rolling boulder. Leinas had never sounded so... broken, the only thing that came remotely close to this was when she was breaking down over her curse back in the empire.

“What do you mean?”

She asked, not knowing if she said anything wrong to set her stoic knight off to this point.

“You can’t even see it, can you? What you have done, what you have achieved.”

The older blonde continued with a small sad chuckle. Now Lakyus was more confused than ever, she had no idea what this all was about. She thought the hard part of the conversation was already over. What even was all of this?

“I guess those who are so strong could never even start to comprehend how the weak and worthless feel.”

Lakyus felt like she was losing grasp on this conversation as it seemed like Leinas was babbling about nonsense over and over.

“Y-you can still knock me around, c-calling you weak seems kind of...”

The young noble tried to say to reassure the woman, but the older blonde just shook her head as a sad little smile made her way on her lips.

“I am so pathetic... at your age I thought so highly of myself, with such arrogance... I had it all, beauty, a noble title, a loving family... then I lost it all, I was cursed, and all my supposed perfect life collapsed around me... everyone turned their back on me.”

That was probably the longest sentence Lakyus ever heard the woman speak. Not that she ever pressured her companion to talk about her past.

“I despaired, but that didn’t last long as every bit of my despair soon turned into rage and hatred... the world had wronged me, and so in return I swore to crush the world in order to fix my life... for a year I lived a life of misery, only my relentless hatred for the world that had scorned me allowed me to carry on and not end it all.”

Lakyus continued to listen to every word Leinas spoke, her mind still trying to comprehend what was going on here.

“Then I met you, a foolish girl swinging a sword with impossible dreams and ambitions... oh, how you reminded me of myself at the time... and yet, you proved yourself far better than I ever was, graceful in both victory and defeat... capable of lending a saving hand to the one who tried to kill you.”

Leinas admitted with some shame filling her voice.

“And I learnt nothing from all of this! The first thing I did once I was back on my feet was not to settle my debt, but to seek out those who wronged me and make them pay.”

She admitted, her stoic persona completely gone as she laid bare her sins before Lakyus.

“I thought that was justice, and then I returned to pay my debt, and were I should have found only scorn for my actions, I found companionship, something I never thought I needed before but understood I deeply missed once I had it.”

Leinas admitted as her eyes fixed on Lakyus’.

“I saw you, a far better person than I ever was, advance into the world with a clear goal in mind, I saw the misery you witnessed... I saw the horror you sought to fight present itself bare and undefeatable before you... I saw as everyone around you, me included, tried to dissuade you... I wanted to see you fail, to give in to your rage and hatred! I wanted you to prove that I was not a weak and worthless being by falling like I fell!”

Tears gathered in the green eyes of the older blonde knight.

“And yet... and yet! You proved me wrong, again and again! When you did not give up when facing the horrors of this world! When you did not give up when everyone around you tried to change your mind! When you did not give up when you laid beaten and broken at the hands of true monsters! You have always proven yourself unbreakable, a strong and perfect existence! While I was a miserable, weak, and worthless excuse of a living being!”

Leinas did not stop even as fresh tears flowed down her face.

Lakyus bowed her head, she had never thought Leinas carried such a burden upon herself... even less that Lakyus herself made it worse day after day.

“So, you ask me what I am going to do now?... nothing... absolutely nothing... for there is nothing I could do and not think you would do better than me.”

Leinas quieted down as she whispered those words.

On her part Lakyus did the only thing someone like her could do to try and ease her pain. She was not smart like Renner who would be capable of solving this with logical arguments, she wasn't as charismatic as Satoru who would be capable of solving this with mere words of encouragement or a story. No, she was neither, but that was alright, because she was herself, and that was good enough.

Lakyus wrapped her arms around the sobbing knight as she hugged her as tightly as she could.

“It's okay, you can be yourself and that will be enough, I like you just fine as you are.”

She whispered to both herself and the crying Leinas.

She felt the older woman's arms wrap around her, sharing in the comforting embrace.

Lakyus felt the desperation in her grasp, as if the older knight would slip and fall in a bottomless abyss if she let her go.

“Well... if you don't know what to do right now... I would not mind you sticking a little longer with me if you wished... you are still one of the strongest people I know.”

She admitted a little bashful at the situation. She didn't want to seem like she was exploiting Leinas' moment of weakness to somehow get her on her side through some kind of manipulation.

The imperial noble's head snapped up as her eyes met with Lakys' ones.

“Really?!”

She whispered hopefully, her visage a far cry from the usual stoic expression she sported all the time.

“Y-yeah! J-just tell me when you have figured out what you want to do... only thing is, if Riyuro decide to join my team, would you be fine working with him too?”

Lakys asked, she had no intention of forcing people to work together if they do not want to. Though, the thought of an adventuring party with Leinas and Riyuro almost made her salivate. They would be unstoppable.

“Lady Lakys, are you sure it would be wise to-“

Leinas began but Lakys did not let her finish.

“Riyuro is a friend, I trust him with my safety as much as I do you, also... if you want to stay I have one more condition.”

She said trying to muster all the seriousness she could as she felt the older woman's muscles tense.

Lakys took a deep breath as she regarded the most pressing point currently on her mind.

“Please... I beg of you... stop it with the titles and just call me Lakys.”

She begged in desperation as she couldn't take that anymore.

Leinas just blinked as she looked at her in slight confusion before her lips slightly arched up in a small smile.

“As you wish, Lakyus.”

She finally said as the younger blonde let out a sigh of relief.

‘It was about time!’

{Satoru’s P.O.V.}

“Kukuku...”

Satoru did not remember the last time he has been so satisfied with himself. These last weeks had been quite the stressful period of time with all the political and societal storms Lakyus and Renner incited.

‘Those two should not be allowed to work together...’ he lamented as even he could not resist the adorable duo’s requests when the devious and ruthless mind of the princess was joined by the righteous and charismatic attitude of her knight.

‘It’s like if Ulbert and Touch-Me joined forces as friends’ he shuddered at the sole thought of what such a union would have brought if it ever happened. He did not think Yggdrasil would have survived the World Disaster and World Champion duo. And, even if on a smaller scale of power, he did not think there was a kingdom capable of stopping the two blondes if they joined forces.

But, regardless of that, he finally got what he came here for and more. His satisfied gaze fell again on the papers he had read and reread a dozen times by now. This was the result of his efforts, and Renner’s slight help in finalizing the contract, the little devil surely made it up to him after putting him through all that bullshit.

Well, now he was being just unfair, after all it had been him that had pushed for the two to work together and fix their friendship. He just underestimated them and did not think them joining forces would result in a war and the creation of a new country and probably second strongest demi-human alliance after the Argland Council State.

Either way, he got two dragon corpses worth of materials and a very exclusive business contract out of it, so he really had no grounds to complain.

After long negotiations, the final chart of rights for the newborn Azerlisia Coalition was finalized and put into action. He was exhausted by then even though he had to do little more than being present. He really had no idea what kind of mental fortitude and brain power Renner had to sustain all of that... and the girl was not even ten. He would have felt quite demoralized if he didn't know she was a genius he had long ago given up on keeping up with.

Adding to that, after all was done, she even had the strength to represent her country's interests on a national level and help him draft the commercial agreement he now so proudly grasped in his hands.

Truly, she had completely redeemed herself from all that she put him through.

He now had exclusive rights over the exportation and distribution of Runecraft items. Something he did not think would have been possible to negotiate for as he would have had to bully a nation into giving it to him, but somehow Renner managed to get it from them without much convincing, hell, they even seemed eager to do so!

She had used the excuse of him having control over the Merchant Guild and the fact he even had favorable international deals with both the Baharuth Empire and Draconic Kingdom that would allow him to expand the Runecraft market around the continent. Also, the quantities he would purchase would allow the newborn nation to have a steady influx of resources and money to rely on.

It was a classic you are not helping me, you are helping yourself situation and Satoru would not have been capable of handling it as well as she did.

Yesterday he visited the Runecraft forges, and he was not left very impressed, the master runecrafters explained the decaying of their art over the years due to lack of funds and the war against the Quagoa. Runecraft weapons weren't exactly very impressed considering how expensive they were to craft and the end result being not much different from a normal magic weapon which was far easier and cheaper to obtain.

No, what Runecraft really excelled at was the sheer versatility of the runes. They have showed him self repairing floors and ever-cold beer barrels. And that was just the tip of the iceberg as more advanced runes put together could have quite the fascinating effects unable to be replicated through simple enchanting, or at least without the use of Data Crystals.

Satoru promised them monetary support and a steady income for their work with the contract he just snatched from the newly established government. Though, he seemed to have gained more of their favor through his offering of a divine beer he found in his inventory rather than any promise of monetary support.

All in all, Runecraft items could turn out to be one of his most remunerative enterprises if well developed and expanded. He

offered a silent prayer and apology to Hilma for what he was about to put on her shoulders. That woman was a saint, and he truly had no idea what he would have done if he never met her.

“Someone is in a good mood.”

A singsong voice called from behind him prompting him to stop his happy sounding humming he just noticed he was vocalizing.

“And now you have ruined it.”

He turns around to say those words directly to the black haired young woman’s face who just gave him a smirk.

“Now, don’t be like a grumpy old fart, you are supposed to be pretty young still.”

The explorer known as Lin joked as she crossed her arms under her small chest.

“Why are you even here, just felt like ruining my mood?”

Satoru had no idea why, but he felt like bickering with this infuriating woman was the only way he was going to get away from her. He had always been a collected and calm person, even around those he had little respect for, but something in this woman just irked him the wrong way.

“Just felt like claiming my reward, you promised me quite the wild ride... and while that little excuse of a dragon ad been enough to warm me up, now I am ready to enjoy a rough time with a true opponent.”

She gave him one of her half hungry half seductive smiles.

He would not say he forgot about it, though, he was not enthusiastic at the thought, even more having to battle against an unknown such as her. Punitto would probably scold him half to

death for accepting this. But it was not like he could back out right now. If he tried, she would probably attack him here and now.

“Can’t this wait just a little more?”

He asked even though he perfectly knew his plea was going to fall on deaf ears.

“Can’t do big guy, I have my own plans, and I am all warm and ready for you... you wouldn’t say no to me, would you?”

He just shook his head at her antics.

“I just don’t get why you keep turning every of your statements into a sexual innuendo.”

He had never been the greatest at social interactions, as his lonely life back in Japan would confirm, he never had any experience when it came to flirting, apart from media. So, he really had no idea if the woman was actually trying to flirt with him or she was just like that.

“Isn’t that obvious? It’s because I know it will get under your skin.”

The woman gave him another of her smirks as he felt like groaning in frustration.

“Meet me outside the cave where we first entered the mountain in a couple hours... I know you can use Teleportation, so do not dare to be late!”

She admonished him as if he was some kind of naughty kid who was about to put his hand in the cookie jar.

“And how will you get there?”

He asked, curious to know if the girl was capable of using the 5th tier or she just possessed quite a rare, for New World's standards, item.

The black-haired explorer glanced at her right and left as if to check that no one was looking or eavesdropping, then she moved forward as if she was about to tell him some secret. Out of reflex Satoru did the same moving his hood near her mouth.

“Wouldn't you like to know that? Well, it is a secret... I guess you will have to subdue and strip me to find out.”

She whispered in a sensual tone as Satoru recoiled back as if struck by lightning. Lin was now sporting a cheshire grin on her face. Even though he was a skeleton he could not help but feel the sensation of something burning on where his cheeks should be before his Emotional Suppression immediately dissipated the feeling. He just turned and left, he knew when a battle was lost and he had no intention of giving her any more ammunitions than she already had.

‘Damn it... she got me good this time’

{Ro-Lente}

{Evileye's P.O.V.}

The masked vampire sat on the soft sofa, a novel in her hands as she spent another afternoon in the company of the woman known as Hilma.

It had been months since the two of them met and Evileye was pretty sure she had got to know all she could about her host and Seven Hands as a whole. The only reason she was still here was due to the long-awaited meeting she will have with the magic caster known as Satoru.

She couldn't lie, it was not like she did not enjoy her time here, it had been a long time since she felt secure enough that she could relax like she was doing after all. She couldn't remember the last time she had read a book only out of pleasure like she did when she still was... well, a long time ago.

As if reading her thoughts, Hilma took that moment to put down the report she was working on and address her.

“Satoru has let me know that he will soon leave the Azerlisia Mountains and return here, so I guess you will soon have the pleasure of meeting him.”

Well, that was a good news if she ever heard one, the blonde caster pondered in her head not missing the slight longing the older-looking woman put in her tone.

“It sounds like you are pretty happy yourself that he is returning... does the distance make the heart grow fond I wonder?”

She was not the type to tease, but in that moment, she felt like this would have been a good occasion to take revenge for that time Hilma had teased her to the point of her Teleporting away out of... well, to this day she was not exactly sure what she had felt in that moment, maybe it was exactly for that reason that she ran away.

“In a sense, but not certainly what you are implying, I am just relieved someone else will help me take care of these reports from now on... Seven Hands, the Merchant Guild, the Magician Guild, the Adventurer Guild, and even the damn crown... I feel like I had less than a day of sleep in the last two weeks... and that stupid bone headed fool is even bringing me more work.”

The blonde woman muttered the last part under her breath but Evileye was able to hear her nonetheless thanks to her enhanced senses.

“You better not make a move on him after what you told the little princess.”

She said as she flipped a page of her book.

“Augh, don’t remind me... the last thing I needed was an angsty teen with a love complex that wants to impress someone who isn’t even... easily impressionable.”

Evileye felt like the woman was about to say something else when she completely changed course and derailed toward a generic statement. It seemed like that even after all these months, there were still some things even she did not catch on.

“But enough of me... a little birdie told me someone became a guardian angel and visits their little charge pretty often.”

Hilma rebutted with that smug smile of hers that screamed, got you, from all pores. Evileye arched an eyebrow at that, not that Hilma could see her doing so, she thought she had been quite stealthy in her visits to Faust, could it be that he...

Her suspicions were answered by Hilma’s next statement.

“Don’t blame poor Faust, I have my way to keep an eye on you... you didn’t really think I would let someone as dangerous as you just roam around without supervision, did you?”

Evileye’s eyes widened. She, of course, had noticed the gazes she was subjected to every time she moved around the city, but she had always been discrete when she went to visit Faust’s family.

To think she had somehow been spotted was quite unexpected, she did not use stealth magic to move around, but still...

Also, what was the meaning in telling her so? Was this just a mere power play on her part? Or was there something else behind it?

“It was a fortunate case that what he knew and told you was not something we were trying to hide from you, though, had it been anyone else... we might need to put him on a check list to make sure, it would be a shame if he disappeared one day with the rest of his family.”

Evileye acted out of instinct as the book fell from her hands as she stood up, her arm stretched toward Hilma as a magic circle appeared in front of her.

“Is that a threat?”

She questioned, she herself not knowing why all of a sudden, her body felt the need to protect those people that meant little to nothing to her. No, that was not right, there was someone who meant something to her there, a giggling child with few strands of blonde hair came to her mind. To protect that little one, she will not hesitate in firing her spell.

“For all you pretend to be unflappable, you are quite emotional when it comes down to it.”

The blonde woman remained calm, as if a 5th tier magic caster was not threatening her life in that exact moment.

“I have no intention of doing anything to them, Faust is just a good man... we don't give relevant information to good men for a reason.”

The vampire lowered her hand dispelling the magic circle now burning with annoyance at being played so easily.

“Do you find enjoyment in playing with people’s heads? Does it make you feel better with yourself? Or is it all just a twisted game to you?”

She questioned as she bowed to grab the book that now laid open on the ground and placing it back on the table.

“You really want an answer?”

Hilma asked as if nothing happened, and they were just having an amicable conversation till that moment, and she had not just been threatened.

“You have a sweet heart under all that cynicism and cold demeanor you display... but you only show it when you are riled up, you remind me partly of myself.”

That took Evileye off guard, for all Hilma had parted with crucial information and hospitality, she had never parted with any details on her person that the caster could not deduce by observing her.

But then again, the fact this woman thought she had her all figured out was quite irritating, comparing her character to her own only added to that growing annoyance.

“I do not think we are alike at all.”

She vocalized her thought as stoically as she could but only managed to elicit a small smile for the older woman.

“Think what you want, but I can spot someone deprived of their childhood and hardened to endure the cruelest sides of this world, when I see one... we either harden and live, or we break and die, there is no other options for the likes of us.”

Evileye closed her eyes at the young woman's words. For all she hated to admit it, even if only in her mind, she had a point there, and she might not have been far off as she thought in her previous statement.

But if that was true, how? How did she seem so at peace with herself and not a brewing pot of repressed memories and emotions like Evileye was? If she truly suffered untold horrors like her own... how did she find peace within herself in just a few years while the vampire had not been able to find any in over two hundred years?

“How... how did you get over all of it? How did you find peace after all you have been subjected to?”

The most desperate part of her wanted to know the answer to that, the small childish voice within her cried out for an answer, a solution to fix what was irreparably broken. Like a child trying to put together a vase they shattered on the ground with the desperation of someone who knew what would happen to them if they did not. But after so many years, the pieces of that vase were so confused and consumed that even recognizing what was what would have been a miracle, let alone trying to put them together.

“You don't.”

That was the curt answer she received from the blonde woman who stood up from her desk and marched toward the sofa before sitting right next to her. Evileye looked at her face noticing details she had no idea how she missed during the months she had known her. The small bags under her eyes, the barely visible stress wrinkles expertly covered with makeup, the endless pit behind those violet eyes.

No, it was not that she had missed it, it was more like Hilma had not allowed her to see it before.

“There is no fixing the past, there is no rewriting it, all we can do is live and move past it, not letting it define us in the here and now, I have come to peace with it... it took time, I stumbled, I hesitated, but when I felt like I was about to give up on it, I always found support from the one I admired and respected most.”

She continued to explain as Evileye’s throat suddenly felt too dry to speak.

“I felt appreciated for who I was, no matter how broken I felt, not for what I could offer, not for how I looked, just me... that is probably the greatest gift I ever received in my entire life.”

She continued with a heavy sigh as Evileye felt the older-looking woman grip the caster’s small cold hand in her slightly large warm one.

“You can’t heal scars, but you can learn to give the weight they deserve and nothing more, to look at them with the understanding of what once was, and how you have accepted reality and not strived toward some impossible goal as if nothing happened nor close within yourself as if you have just suddenly stopped living.”

Evileye resounded with those words on more than one level as she acknowledged Hilma’s explanation. She had an idea about who the woman was talking about, and it made sense seeing how the she was ready to die for him the first time the two of them met.

“And all it took was just one being? He must be someone special for his mere presence to warrant such a reaction.”

She said, trying to not sound bitter. She had known thousands of people during her long life and she never met anyone even remotely capable of emitting such an aura as Hilma described.

Her brief thought was interrupted by Hilma's laugh, as if she had just heard the greatest joke in existence.

“Oh, gods above no! He is as flawed as any of us, even more so in some areas as he had brought me to the brink of frustration many times over with his demeanor toward certain issues... his presence is not some holy miracle that can automatically fix people around him... he just... worked for me, only the gods know why, he just did... and I am glad I have got to know him when I did, or I dread to think about what would have become of me in the long run.”

She clarified her previous point as Evileye just nodded in acknowledgement of her words.

In that moment she truly wished she had met someone like that during her long existence, the young girl inside of her still believing she could, but she had learnt long ago to not believe in concept and twists more fitting a book rather than real life. Still, the voice was harder and persistent now that she heard about someone who managed to achieve it.

Who knew, someday she might end up meeting someone like that too, she entertained the thought for a few instants before shaking her head and going for the midway abandoned book on the table.

Reading a good novel might get rid of those foolish thoughts.

{Azerlisia Mountains}

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

The first thing the masked undead saw when he teleported to the location indicated, was a dark halberd coming his way. He managed to avoid the flying weapon that swiftly turned its course and came right back into the grasp of its owner.

“You are late.”

He heard the unimpressed voice of his soon to be opponent.

“You have some guts keeping a refined lady such as myself waiting.”

She continued with a lighthearted tone that did not at all go along with her current aura.

“Are you done giving air to your mouth?”

Satoru questioned as he really wanted to put an end to all this and get it over with. Lin gave him a hungry smile that reminded him of Renner for a moment, he had no idea other humanoid beings could even get close to that level of uneasiness, and since this was not Renner’s childish face he was used too, the sensation was even worse.

“Now you are speaking my language magic caster [Ability Boost]”

He almost did not see her coming, not because he was having problem following her, but more like because he had never faced such a quick opponent since he arrived in this world.

Out of instinct he put up his gloved hand blocking the descending halberd. He felt his illusionary body dispel and the sensation that he could only associate with taking damage surge within him. It was a negligent amount for sure, but still, it meant that weapon was capable of hurting him.

He was almost tempted here and now to go all out and kill his opponent and steal it. But alas, he had no idea who he was dealing with. For all he knew he could be facing another player right now, the suspicious information she had in regard to the Japanese language and some of its culture were worrying.

(Silent Triple Maximize Magic: Fireball)

Satoru opted for a save choice and kept on his act as a 6th tier caster. The three fire spells exploded right in her face as the short distance did not allow her to dodge. He saw her body fly away from him but, much to his dismay, she landed perfectly on her feet.

“Well, well, did you take me for an ice dragon I wonder? Or did you think such low tier magic could hurt little old me?”

She taunted as a feral grin blossomed on her face. Satoru took notice of her words, she indeed did not show any signs of being hurt by his blank-range spell. ‘She might be a level 60’ his assessment was based on his previous experience with more than ten years of PvP.

(Silent Magic: Dragon Lightning)

The spell erupted from a magic circle created right in front of him. His opponent did not even bother to dodge as she just raised her halbert.

“[Slash Strike]”

She effortlessly cut his spell in two with her Martial Art. Satoru took a step back. This was completely uncharted territory for him. Sure, he had learnt much about Martial Arts and their inner work from Gazef and Lakyus, but Lin clearly used them on a complete different level from those two. She was certainly the strongest

being he had ever encountered in this world, he would have no problem believing she would have been capable to go toe to toe with the White Dragon Lord and have a good chance of winning.

“[Fly][Magic Caster’s Blessing]”

For the first time ever since he came to this world, he felt the need to use one of his favorite buffing spells.

(Silent Magic: Explosive Land Mine)

He was ready to get the level of this fight up a notch.

“Oh? So, you are finally starting to take me seriously... good... if all you had was what you showed against that excuse of a Dragon Lord, I would have been greatly disappointed [Flow Acceleration].”

Satoru did not respond.

“[Double Magic: Fire Missile] [Double Magic: Lightning Missile] [Double Magic: Freeze Lance] [Slow]”

He called out his spells as the young woman charged him seemingly shrugging off his 3rd tier debuff without any problems.

She proceeded to dance around his 4th tier spells moving with such precision and elegance Satoru never saw anyone use before, even in Yggdrasil animations could only go so far, this was a true warrior moving through his barrage of spells, closing in to him.

‘Good, I got you now’ he thought as he saw the explorer lowered to let his Ice Lance pass above her head without stopping her charge toward him, now being barely a couple of meters away.

“[Double Cross]!”

As he heard the name of the familiar skill, he immediately widened his eyes and flew up avoiding her weapon and its phantom version that slashed at him from behind.

There were no doubts about it, that was clearly a Valkyrie class exclusive skill. That meant his opponent possessed quite the powerful medium range melee class, it was such a good class that it was a major reason why Shalltear Bloodfallen, the Floor Guardian of Nazarick, was considered the strongest NPC of her rank.

Even though the skill was unexpected he still managed to dodge it and fulfil his plan as the black-haired woman stopped right under him. He saw with some satisfaction as the magical land mine's rune activated melting the snow covering it.

Lin's eyes widened in clear panic as she had noticed the same, he wondered if she would get out unharmed from this, it was unlikely as only a 90+ level player with adequate defenses could do so.

“[Greater Evasion]!”

He heard the voice of the woman call out the Martial Art's name hurriedly as the mine exploded under her. His eyes, if he had them, would have popped out of his skull as he saw the woman jump up in an arch as she perfectly avoided the range of the explosion.

After flipping in the air she landed on her feet clearly unamused about what just happened.

“You are one crazy bastard for setting up such a trap, I almost got a little roasted there!”

She half-yelled for her voice to reach him.

On his part Satoru was still staring down at her. It was clear by now that he was not against any ordinary individual. He still had all his trump cards at his disposal and his entire set of skills and spells relegated to his undead race levels, though he was refraining to use them for obvious reasons, if the situation got to the point of her becoming a real threat, he would do what he needed to put her down.

(Silent Magic: Life Essence)

He tried to pry on her HP as he still could not believe she got out of that mine scot free. He almost gaped when he felt a strange sensation of wrongness as his spell did not activate and instead seemed to fizzle out, this never happened before and the only conclusion he could reach was that his spell has been blocked. Which meant his opponent had quite a valuable anti-information item on her person.

The woman, on her part, froze up for a moment before covering her armored chest with her free arm.

“Ahhhh! You pervert! You wanted to take a peek, didn’t you? You naughty boy!”

She cried out in an exaggerated high pitch as if he had just molested her.

This attitude of hers had begun pissing him off, even more now that it seemed like she was only playing around.

“Tch, you are quite the hypocrite as you could not get your enhanced elven gaze off me during the battles against the Quagoa and dragons.”

He rebutted as he addressed for the first time her race ever since he saw her ears all those weeks ago. In all response Lin lost her playful smile as a serious expression took over her facial features.

“I am going to hurt you now.”

That was all the warning she gave before shooting toward him as she left the ground to follow him in the sky.

“[Triple Magic: Obsidian Sword]”

The three magic blades emitting a dark aura shot toward the ascending elf as she limited herself to parrying them with her own weapon. Though, the deflected blades immediately curved their trajectory to hone on their intended target.

The woman was clearly taken aback as she did not expect this at all and managed to dodge only the first two sword while taking the third right in her back eliciting a pained gasp to erupt from her mouth.

As the remaining blades curved their trajectory again to hone on her once more, she raised her weapon.

“[Double Air Slash]”

She called out as she slashed the air sending two wind blades against his remaining Obsidian Swords. The wind blades managed to break the magical blades apart without much trouble.

As this whole thing was happening Satoru had not remained idle and, as soon as Lin’s attention was off him and onto his spell, he used a silent Complete Invisibility to mask his presence as he closed in on her.

The elf was clearly confused as she looked around unable to locate him.

“[Greater Ability Sense]...[Steeled Arm Strike]!”

As he was about to reach her, she spanned around and thrust her free hand, clenched in a fist, directly at his chest. Not expecting the attack at all he was sent flying back by the sheer power behind it.

‘What even is this shit?! Aren’t Martial Arts supposed to be taxing on the mind?! She has already activated three passive ones and she has constantly used some more of them to counter me! What kind of mental fortitude must she possess to not get overwhelmed by it! Lakyus could barely stand for a minute before collapsing while using two Martial Arts at the same time, and she is supposed to be a genius!’ the undead lamented in his mind as he just did not comprehend how this was even possible with the information he had at his disposal.

The black-haired woman did not waste time and used his mental tirade to close the gap between the two of them as she brought her fist back, ready to strike again.

“[Steeled Arm Strike]!”

But this time he was ready to respond.

“[Maximize Magic: Shockwave]”

As his spell activated, this time around, the one sent flying was none other than the explorer who got blasted away toward the side of the mountain crashing with a loud boom against it as she got buried in the snow.

Satoru had little to no hope that this would have been enough to put her out of commission and immediately started preparing for when she would return.

“[Magic Boost] [Freedom] [Haste]”

He buffed himself with more spells as a loud rumble and explosion from the snow announced the return of his opponent who flew straight at him with her halberd ready.

“[Gravity Blast]”

At this point it was clear his 6th tier spells would not be enough to bring her down and he got ready to bring out his 7th tier spells.

“[Greater Slash Strike]!”

The Martial Art imbued weapon collided with his spell, the result was the cancellation of his spell and halting of her momentum. At this point Satoru had been quite surprised at what Martial Arts could achieve, stopping a 7th tier spell like that was certainly no small feat considering even his passive defense would not have been able to nullify it, or maybe that weapon of hers was special in some way.

He studied his opponent as the two of them took a moment of pause, her hair was quite disheveled but other than that, she only showed a couple of scratches on her face, her black and white eyes... ‘Wait! WHITE! Since when was one of her eyes white!?’ he almost lost his concentration as the suddenly appeared heterochromia took him off guard.

“I never met an elf before you... and this might seem insensitive but... does your race often change eye color?”

He asked as he never heard of anything like this, not that he had inquired about elves before. Lin’s eyes widened at his words as she went right for her left eye touching it all over as if there was supposed to be something there.

“Ah, I knew it was not going to last... damn it...”

She said to no one in resignation with a heavy sigh.

“And stop calling me an elf! I am... a half-elf...”

Her voice lowered as if she had just admitted something shameful about herself.

‘Well, that is quite the rare specimen, I never heard of humans breeding with any other races... I didn’t even know it was possible’ Satoru pondered as he felt his collector’s instincts tingle at the sight of the now revealed half elf. ‘She is also extremely powerful for this world standards... I wonder, what if’ his thoughts were interrupted when the black-haired half-elf pointed her weapon right at his masked face.

“I am quite impressed, I didn’t have to exert so much of my power in a very long while, but now... I am done playing... and I have the impression you are not at your limit yet either... so get ready!”

She smirked at him as her weapons transformed in her hands. The blade retracted as the pointed end sharpened and divided into two dented edged ends, her previous halberd had now transformed into a two ended fork like spear, a brilliant holy light manifested between the two dented edges as holy energy crackled all over them.

Satoru observed in fascination the whole process as he finally recognized the weapon. It was one of the few trick-weapons Yggdrasil had added during its early years as some kind of homage to an older game he had never bothered researching. The masked undead certainly did not expect to see one of those old relics here, as even in Yggdrasil such weapons were extremely rare by the later years of the game as they were a limited time

prize and most accounts that possessed them had been deleted. By that time the power creep had already left such weapons in the dust, but they were still quite the awesome catch for collectors all over the servers.

As absorbed in his resurfaced memories as he was, he almost missed said halberd turned spear as it came straight for his head.

“[Teleportation]”

He ran away just in time to avoid the holy spear coming for him, reappearing a good fifty meters away.

Before he could do anything, the half-elf rose her spear toward the heavens as a multitude of rays of light erupted from the spear and shot in an arch right toward him.

“[Magic Barrier]”

His conjured shield withstood most of the barrage as only the final rays managed to go through and hit him. The holy damage, for all it was one of his major racial weaknesses, was largely mitigated by his robes which had a very high defense against that element, now, if that was fire, he was sure this would have actually been quite worse.

‘You want to play the long-distance battle against a caster? Your funeral then’ he thought as he prepared for his counterattack.

“[Greater Magic Seal] [Hell Flame]”

He stored the 7th tier spell in the seal, ready to be released at his command.

“Well then now, wait... what kind of ability is that?!”

He could not help but question aloud as he saw the heterochromatic half-elf raise her spear as a multitude of ethereal

copies appeared in the air. Even in Yggdrasil he had never seen a weapon capable of creating more than two copies of itself, the only other way to achieve something similar to that would be to conjure magical weapon like his Obsidian Sword.

‘Who the hell said these weapons were not good for PvP?!’ he demanded to know immediately so he could give them a piece of his mind!

The half-elf immediately flew straight for him, followed by a dozen of ethereal copies of her weapon.

“[Greater Piercing]!”

He heard her call another unknown Martial Art of which he could deduce the use seeing how her weapon and all its copies began to shine as if they were being buffed.

‘Oh, COME ON! This is cheating! You can’t buff the copies too! That wasn’t possible in Yggdrasil!’ he protested in his mind, but unfortunately for him, his words went unanswered as Lin close in on him.

He knew the best move would be to use Greater Rejection to dispel all those annoying copies, but that was a 9th tier spell and if he used it he would blow his cover for sure. So, instead, he limited himself to play her own game.

“[Triple Maximize Magic: Shield Sphere]”

He casted his defensive magic as a multitude of shields appeared all around him creating a three layered defensive sphere around his body.

He heard the loud impact of a multitude of spears hitting the shields as some of them broke apart, only managing to stop their momentum, but that was exactly what he needed.

“[Maximize Magic: Shockwave]”

Now that he was surrounded this was the best possible chance to get rid of some of those annoying copies.

The remaining shields fell apart as his latest spell expanded and tore apart the ethereal spears surrounding him. Lin, having learnt her lesson from last time, flew back to not get stuck in the area of effect of the spell.

“[Teleportation]”

He immediately casted his maneuvering spell as he appeared right behind the retreating half-elf and tried to grab her from behind much to her surprise and slight panic. Well, the sight of a caster trying to grab their melee opponent wasn't an everyday thing.

“[Evasion]!”

She cried out her Martial Art as she evaded Satoru's hands maneuvering around them. ‘Damn it!’ he cursed in his mind as his chance slipped right through his hands, quite literally.

She took the chance to turn her spear around and go straight for his chest.

Satoru dodged the incoming attack, but the half-elf retreated. He had no idea if she wanted to use again any of her weapon's abilities, but if that was the case he could not let her, or else he would not be able to pull off the same trick twice. He needed her close and personal, which should not have been difficult seeing

how he was a caster and her a melee fighter, but apparently this was not going to go his way.

He needed her to attack him now, before she could do whatever she planned to.

A realization dawned on him in that instant. It would be a low blow, but as Punitto often said. There is no time for honor and pity in war.

“Say, little half-elf, you seem to have a problem with your whole race... are there some mommy or daddy issues I should be aware of?”

He had actually never taunted an enemy before now, and he had quite a few doubts on if his words would have even been enough to rile someone up.

The change was immediate, like a lightning strike. Lin scowled openly as her left eye visibly twitched as she changed her mind and immediately sprinted toward him.

“[Greater Pierce Strike]!”

She called out as she slammed her spear right on his chest.

‘Well... that hurts... quite a bit’ he admitted as his hands immediately went to grab the spear’s handle midway up locking it in place as Lin tried to free it from his grip.

“Well! You have quite the grip... I have to admit! But! What are you going to do... with both your hands stuck?! Certainly not cast magic!”

She mocked as they continued their short tag of war.

“Well, I certainly can do this... [Release]”

The undead calmly said as the spell he sealed before got released. The small flame danced toward the half-elf for a few seconds and before she knew it, she was engulfed in hellfire flames.

She released a high-pitch scream of both shock and pain as she fell from the air, she even managed to free her weapon from his grip with a strength he never felt or saw her display before.

The burning Lin fell to the ground as she began to roll on the snow as if she was trying to extinguish the flames, not that it would do her much good seeing how hell fire couldn't be just put out by mere water, frozen or not.

He barely managed to compose that thought that he immediately had to eat up his own words as the explorer below him actually managed to extinguish the fire.

He looked in astonishment at the scene happening below him, but his astonishment soon turned into curiosity as he saw the snow all around her glow more vibrantly than all the other. The reason for that was not hard to locate, as her spear laid among the snow, the holy power it possessed seemingly spread to the snow all around it, making it into some kind of holy snow that managed to put off the flames. Or, at least, that was the only reason he could think of as the spell was supposed to be a damage over time kind of attack.

The half elf stood up, dusting herself off from the remaining snow. She looked up at him with some clear contempt on her face. 'Ah, so now this is my fault?' he asked rhetorically as he really did not see how any of this was any fault of his.

His frustration at the silent accusation was completely overshadowed by the surprise of what his eyes were seeing. Initially he thought it was just snow, but no! The right half of her

hair had really turned white! ‘What the hell is wrong with this half-elf?!... half-elf... oh! I see! That is pretty neat I have to admit’ he could not help but admire the perfect symmetry of it all. He really had no idea why the half-elf was hiding her traits, but that was not his main concern now.

No, what truly worried him was the explorer taking up her weapon again.

“What was that about? Am I not hot enough for you?!”

She questioned from under him as she touched the slight burns his spells left on her.

“That was a neat trick, I will admit as much!”

He heard her voice fly up to him as she gave him a ferocious smirk that didn’t reassure him at all.

“And before ending this, I wanted to try one last thing... good luck surviving... Marquis.”

He felt like groaning at her words but refrained as the worst thing she could do was use another ability of her weapon he was unaware of.

She raised her weapon as a large white magic circle appeared under her. She looked up at him with a twisted smile worth of being on par with Renner’s.

“This is for taunting me, you unsensitive ass [Raphael’s Judgment]!”

‘WHAT THE FUCK DID SHE JUST USE?! THAT IS A FUCKING SERAPHIM RESTRICTED CLASS SKILL!’ Satoru panicked internally for a moment before his Emotional

Suppression kicked in and his instincts screamed at him use one of his trump cards.

“[Body of Effulgent Beryl] [Greater Magic Shield]”

That skill was very dangerous for him as it calculated its damage based on the negative karma of its target. It was a skill that dealt both physical and magical holy damage. Using his 10th tier spell Body of Effulgent Beryl he nullified the physical damage, and through his 8th tier Greater Magic Shield plus his items he protected himself from most of the magical damage.

He observed as the giant sight-blinding, burning with holy magic, sword descended upon him. He felt his spells taking effect as the sword exploded on contact with his barriers and a minor magical damage was inflicted upon him.

As the blinding light subsided, he was still standing, the tension he was feeling slowly dissipated. But he was sure of one thing, Lin had been playing around like he did till now, and he had no idea on how she could access class restricted skills.

So, it would only be fair, to repay her in kind.

(Silent Magic: Explosion)

In an instant the whole area around his opponent exploded with a loud boom comparable to the sound of a hundred thunders. Dirt, snow, and stone flew everywhere as the landscape was rearranged to accommodate the explosive power of his spell.

{Lin's P.O.V.}

She coughed hardly as the dust cloud enveloped her. The half-elf had no idea what happened. One moment she wanted to test the magic caster before her with a true attack using her Talent, the

next her skill impacted him as he used some unknown spells to defend himself, and then... everything around her exploded.

She could still feel the sound of the deafening explosion reverberate through her bones.

‘Fuck, that hurts like a bitch... not even comparable with that fire!’ she lamented as she checked for any broken bones. It had been a long time since anyone managed to damage her this much, for all she had hold back till that last attack, it seemed like her opponent did not appreciate and retaliate in kind.

“Cough! 6th tier caster my ass... cough!”

She continued to cough as the dust slowly settled. This equipment was not something special if compared to the top tier treasures of the six gods, but still... the fact he managed to go toe to toe with her like this and even hold back was intriguing. He had survived a very powerful skill of her, though, it could just be that he wasn’t exactly a malign entity and so the power of the skill was just not that great against him.

She dusted herself off as she got out of the crater the spell caused, only to come face to face, or would be better to say face to chest, with her opponent.

“Well, that was quite childish of you, don’t you think?”

She teased as the caster audibly scoffed at her words.

“You are one to talk... I hope you have a good explanation for what you just did... do I need to remind you, this was supposed to be a spar.”

Satoru said as he visibly limped away from her toward a rock his spell unearthed and proceeded to sit on it. ‘So,, that was not as

ineffective as it seemed' she guessed as she followed the caster's example as she impaled her spear into the ground before jumping up on the rock and sitting next to him.

"Well, you kind of asked for it, I was having fun and all of a sudden you started pissing me off... all to lure me into a trap, how childish is that?"

She complained as she pouted, something she didn't do since she was a child with her aunt, but something she felt like she needed to do in that moment.

"It's called strategy."

He rebutted with the serious tone of his.

"It's a childish tantrum."

By now, she was just trying to see if he would continue their banter, but much to her disappointment he just sighed in defeat.

"So, mind telling me how you were capable of using that skill of yours?"

He questioned as she just shrugged her shoulders.

"A lady has her secrets."

She was not going to spill the beans as that was a secret that would not only affect her, and it wasn't her place to say, no matter how much of a great time she had with this spar.

Speaking of which, she felt so relaxed after releasing all of that steam accumulated over decades of disappointing opponents and cocky brats. This was the first time she felt like she could just enjoy herself in a battle where she could choose how much she wanted to go out and her opponent would keep up with her.

“I thought as much, so, what is up with that hiding half of your body features thing?”

‘Augh, of all the things...’ she took a deep breath as she hoped he would not question her on that regard.

“You should mind your own business, you know, I am not here asking you why you wear a mask, am I?”

She rebutted his question.

“Umu, fair I guess, you can’t choose family, but you can choose friends.”

That was a good saying if she ever heard one.

“Problematic family?”

Gods, it was strange to chitchat casually with the one you had fought a not so safe battle with not ten minutes before.

“Umu... I will share if you do as well.”

Eh, what did she expect? That was fair she guessed, it wasn’t like the man knew who he was, she could probably count on a hand the people outside the Theocracy’s upper-class who knew of her existence. And, by the end, she would still have free fingers.

“You ride a hard bargain... no wonder you are pretty well known as a merchant too... but, I am curious, so you are on.”

She took a plunge, worst case scenario, she will just have to lie a little.

“Umu, let’s see... I guess my father has never really been much of one for the little time he had stayed with my mother... he was not a pleasant man to be around, I resented him quite a lot for my

entire life... the things I saw that man do... well, I would rather not talk about it.”

The masked magic caster summarized part of his personal story. To say the words resonated with her would have been an understatement. She knew exactly what he was talking about. She may not have seen her father do such actions directly, but her long childhood was lived under the shadow of those actions.

In that moment she truly felt like she found a kindred spirit, a first in her long life, and as the cherry on top, he was quite fun to battle with too. She kind of regretted not going all out right now, but what was done was done.

She took a deep breath as she tried to vocalize the story, she would have gladly given up her right arm to forget.

“We are quite alike, you and me, what my... father... did was something that continue to haunt my existence to this day.”

She paused as she could not believe she was actually telling someone this. But after their battle and his short confession, she realized that if there was someone who could understand her plight in this world, that someone would be Satoru.

“He cursed me, like the evil being he is, to a life of solitude and disdain from everyone around me... even my own mother could not stand the sight of me.”

She whispered that last sentence as if she was still a child confessing a closely kept secret.

“The hair, eye, and ears I guess...”

Satoru mused as he glanced down at her once more. She did not dignify that with an answer, she already felt like she spoke more than enough about the subject.

“Though, I will say, I find you far more agreeable in this state than when you were still pretending to be human... I think you should be yourself more often, that is what one of my old friends once told me.”

Her eyes slightly widened as she glanced at the man sitting next to her.

“Those traits make you special... I think people are far to afraid of special things, since they perceive them as strange and unnatural... I, on the other hand, live to see the strangest and most special of things... if the world was just one giant identical mass of land, what would even be the point or the thrill in exploring it?”

She continued to listen with rapt attention, hanging from his every word as no one ever said something similar to that to her in her life.

“Shouldn’t you already know such things? You are an explorer after all.”

She couldn’t stop a timid smile from making its way on her face.

“I guess I am.”

She said lowly with a softness that surprised even her.

“Thank you for your words.”

For all she mostly ignored it, she has still been well educated by her aunt and so she felt obliged to convey her thanks when someone did something nice for her.

“I guess my time here is up, I got what I wanted.”

‘And a little more’ she added in the loneliness of her mind as she stood up from the rock.

“I hope we will be able to meet again in the future... oh, and say bye for me to that brat when you see her again.”

She said as she rummaged through her pouch in search of a certain item. Satoru seemed to want to move in that moment as he tried to stand up, but after a few seconds, fell back on the rock. ‘Probably his leg’ she guessed, feeling a little guilty for injuring him which was a new one as she never felt any such feelings in any of her previous battles or spars.

“I hope I at least have got an honorable mention in your diary.”

He said jokingly, her eyes widened as she felt this was the first time he openly started a banter with her.

“Net even close.”

She gave him a playful smirk as she found what she was searching for.

‘No, you got an entire book about you’ she thought as the item activated and she disappeared in thin air.

‘This has been so much fun... I truly hope we will see each other again’ she thought as darkness enveloped her before she reached her destination.

A.N.

And here it is, last chapter of the arc, and it has been a pain to write! I mean, don’t get me wrong, enjoyable... but a pain for how many times I had to rewrite certain lines that just felt wrong.

Still hope you enjoyed the “spar” as, if you didn’t get it, this was a mere battle between Satoru the magic caster and Lin the explorer, and not a battle between Satoru the Overlord and Antilene the Extra-seat. Apart from that last exchange at least.

Also, I feel like Satoru’s shitty life actually make him far more similar to all those broken characters in Overlord than I ever previously imagined.

Well, anyway, I hope to see many comments / reviews about your opinions on the events of this chapter, or even your opinion on the whole arc.

Till next time! Stay safe!