

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Hey there! How are you wonderful people doing? I just came out from a week of intense fever and just recovered, so yeah, that is the reason for the delay of this chapter. That and I planned for this to be a bit longer than an average chapter due to reasons, but I don't think anyone will complain about the added length!

Well, aside from that, we are starting a new arc, so I hope you are ready for all the madness which will ensue!

Chapter 74: The Eleventh Hour

“Ready?”

“I was born ready.”

The two casters exchanged a grin before pointing their hands at each other.

“[Fireball]!”

“[Lightning]!”

Fire roared into existence followed by a thunderous flash of light, the two spells meeting in the center of the arena causing a deafening explosion to occur from their impact.

As the smoke dissipated the gathered crowd erupted into applause and even the rare cheer.

The two casters immediately bowed toward the crowd and waved as they concluded the demonstration.

“Well done, well done, I see your little trip to the empire gave its fruits.”

Both of them turned toward the dark voice they have been so used to hearing for the past years.

“Master Satoru! It is all thanks to your teachings!”

“It is as Arche said! We wouldn’t have been able to reach this level without your guidance!”

The two expressed their gratitude with a bow.

“You two flatter me, you are too humble as usual, still, I thank you for your splendid demonstration on this inauguration.”

The master bowed to them, much to the amazement and shock of his two students.

“To all future students! Now that the demonstration is over I invite you all to follow me for the rest of orientation!”

They heard the magically enhanced voice of one of the teachers call out to the crowd who slowly began to disperse from around the small arena.

“Now, I think you two have an appointment with Lakyus, if I am not mistaken.”

The two nodded vigorously.

““[Fly]””

The couple of caster intoned at the same time as they flew out of the arena and into the capital.

“Mind your landing!”

The masked caster shouted after them. ‘These brats, they grow so fast, finally reaching the 3rd tier and now they fly everywhere... the foolishness of youth’ Satoru canalized all his old uncle energy into that thought, much to his own amusement.

Seeing how a lot of the ones who had enrolled at the newly establish magical academy were still looking at him instead of following their teacher, he decided to remove himself from the picture with a silent [Teleportation].

He knew that his duty would have demanded his immediate return to the mansion, after all, there passed no day without a good dose of paperwork to take care of. But seeing how this was just such a nice day, he doubted that indulging himself for a few minutes outside would make much of a difference, hence why he reappeared in the middle of the commercial square, just in front of his own shop.

His gaze immediately rose toward the wooden headboard, the carved inscriptions having been consumed a little by the years. He chuckled to himself at the fact that when he first obtained it, he was still incapable of even reading it for himself, it had truly been a long time since those distant first days in this New World.

He heard a gasp coming from inside the crowded shop as apparently one of the customers noticed him standing outside and just pointed him out to his companions.

The masked caster immediately began to walk away before the entire shop noticed him. No matter how much time may pass or

how many titles he would obtain, he will never get used to so much attention.

He walked through the busy streets, the light breeze making his robes flutter. Most of the people turned toward him as he passed, their gazes lingering a few seconds before returning to their own affairs much to his relief.

Some of the merchants even waved at him, he waved back even though he didn't recognize most of them but by their small smiles, his simple act of acknowledging them was enough to make their day.

The buzzing of the city, or specifically this district, always managed to relax him like nothing else, ever since he had arrived here, strolling has been his way to decompress. Sometimes he even wondered if his own world ever had something similar when the air outside was still breathable.

He blinked back to reality as his eyes met the entrance of a certain alleyway, The shadow of a smile would have appeared on his face if he still had the muscles to make such an expression, that was the place where he first met his partner in crime, quite literally.

He moved toward it as his mind was engulfed by the memories of the ex-prostitute trying to seduce him and poison him right there. When he turned the corner, he was surprised to be met with a couple of people hanging against the wall, well, at least one of them was, seeing like the other was busy sucking the first one's face off with her mouth.

Satoru made to leave the scene before it became awkward when the one pinned against the wall noticed him, his eyes visibly

widening as he pushed off of him his companion who protested vehemently before she noticed the caster as well.

Both of them straightened their posture and immediately stood at attention.

“Sir! My deepest apologies! I promise this will never happen again! We have been looking over this sector and nothing seems to be out of the ordinary!”

The youthful male almost shouted as he was visibly sweating bullets under the caster’s gaze.

Satoru didn’t really know what to say, he didn’t really expect to find anyone here, but it was kind of natural now that he thought about it, he was near both his shop and his mansion, it was only normal every street would be patrolled, crimes were at an all time low in the capital seeing how only those with malicious intent still practiced any.

“Keep up the good work.”

That was all he felt like saying as he turned away and left the scene. He felt one of his hands go for his chest as he only felt the slightest uncomfortableness from the situation. Normally his old self would have been envious, even if only in the slightest, after all he had desired that kind of companionship in the past, the fact he currently had no feelings toward it didn’t bode well with him.

It was human nature to seek out a partner to share your life with. For all his appearance would say otherwise, he still considered himself quite human at heart, so the realization of that desire being no longer existent within him troubled him.

He shrugged off the problem for the moment and continued with his walk. His feet brought him straight to his mansion, maybe he

should talk with Hilma about it, she always seemed to have the best explanations for this kind of thing.

He ignored the staff as he marched inside. Maybe he had just been stuck for too long in one place, Him and Renner should just choose a destination and go on another vacation. He didn't even notice how his mind immediately went on to add the devilish princess to his party as if it was the most normal of outcomes. But really, he couldn't imagine running around the continent without her tagging along. She had become a main member of his party by now, she had fought for that spot, so it was only fair for him to acknowledge it.

But where should they go? The Slane Theocracy seemed like an interesting place, but it also smelled like trouble from halfway across the world, human supremacy was not something he got along with even during his Yggdrasil days. The alternative was to go for a non-human nation, but they had just done that so it may feel redundant.

The council state could be a nice middle-ground, his only apprehension being the presence of some Dragon Lords. He doubted the despotic White Dragon Lord had any real allies seeing his attitude toward anyone who wasn't him, but maybe he should confirm with Vulmitar to see if he made any enemies among the dragons by killing him before doing anything else.

He entered his study, which was more like Hilma's study only to find two blondes playing a game of cards.

"How was the inauguration?"

Asked the more well endowed of the two without sparing him a single look.

“Went accordingly to schedule, Rayne and Arche put up a good enough spectacle.”

He said without betraying any emotion behind his words.

“Those brats are too cocky for their own good, they managed to breach into the 3rd tier and learn a couple spells in record time and suddenly they think themselves some kind of prodigy.”

Evileye scoffed as she drew a card.

“You sound like a nagging granny, you know that? Let the younglings enjoy their success.”

Hilma’s words elicited a grunt from the blonde caster as she laid down her cards.

“I may be a nag, but I am still alive and not buried somewhere because I was too cocky... three of a kind.”

The short caster said smugly as she showed off her three queens.

“You know, sometimes it may pay off to take a risk... flush.”

Hilma rebutted, showing off her hand much to the shorter caster’s consternation.

“You cheated!”

She accused, her gloved finger pointing at Hilma’s smug face.

“That is what sore losers always say.”

The ex-prostitute just ignored her and shuffled the cards once more.

“You seem to be having fun, space for one more?”

He asked causing both of their heads to snap in his direction.

““NO!””

They both yelled at him much to his amusement. The trauma from the last time they all played together was still fresh apparently. Well, it wasn't like he planned to win every match, he had just been lucky, he even felt a bit bad about it seeing how Evileye seemed to be sobbing by the end of it.

Now that he thought about it, he should have thrown some hands, but his instincts demanded for him to win when given the occasion.

“Deal those damned cards before I die of old age.”

Evileye made a gesture for Hilma to hurry up.

“Where do you need to be that you are in such a hurry?”

The violet eyed woman asked.

“Nowhere, I just want to wipe that satisfied grin off your face, it's annoying.”

Satoru almost chuckled at the scene, he had no idea when the two of them became such good friends. It all made him miss his gone by days with his old friends, they had played that same game from time to time being one of the few card games present back in Yggdrasil.

Evileye had been quite the addition to his little merry band of misfits. Hilma assured him she had an eye on the caster and nothing seemed outside the realm of simple curiosity, she was quite inquisitive on the way he ran his organization, but didn't seem to do much with the information.

To be honest Satoru didn't mind having her around, she was the most knowledgeable person he ever met about magic. It was clear she had done extensive research probably spanning decades

seeing how she even developed her own field of magic, something he found endlessly fascinating as no one in Yggdrasil ever came close to doing something remotely similar. It made him wonder if his own two pupils would ever manage to pull something similar and if this creative ability was something only natives could tangle with.

He wouldn't have minded giving it a try himself, but the few things he managed to extract from the secretive caster made his head hurt. He really had no idea how magical circle and constructs worked at all, he just limited himself to following his natural instincts, so it may take him years to approach an understanding on the bases of the matter. Years he currently did not have at his disposal to just lock himself away in a library.

“Hey Satoru, draw me two cards.”

His train of thought was interrupted by Hilma's request.

“Wait! That is not allowed!”

The white masked caster cried out in outrage.

“I never knew there was a rule banning others from drawing for you.”

Hilma rebutted with an angelic smile that only served to remind Satoru of Bukubukuchagama when she knew she had won an argument.

“Humph! So, two can play this game, you know?! Satoru! Draw me three cards!”

And with that he had been suddenly pulled inside their squabble as a card dealer for the foreseeable future.

‘If only this moment could last forever’ he thought as he felt at peace with himself while indulging the two women who just decided to take a game of cards far too seriously, but he would have it no other way.

{Raeven’s P.O.V.}

“Look papa! Look!”

The blonde marquis shifted his gaze toward whatever his two years old boy was pointing at, that being none other than a fully armored adventurer whose silver armor shined under the sunlight making him almost hurtful to look at.

His little boy loved knight attires, he had always been fascinated with them ever since he could walk for himself. Many of his guards found it adorable even though they had the good sense to keep their feelings to themselves, something Raeven appreciated.

For all Rifan was a toddler, it would still not do to be treated as anything less than his heir, even if it was all in good fun.

He truly hoped his son’s fascination remained just an infatuation with the attire and not the profession, he doubted his poor heart could bear seeing his son put himself in danger for no reason other than a whim.

The carriage proceeded smoothly over the capital’s streets, a far cry from the first time he visited the city as a youngling, at the time only the street leading to the castle was in a somehow acceptable state.

Speaking of the city itself, the comparison to its previous state was baffling, to say the least, he could hardly recognize some of the streets as they seemed to have been completely demolished and rebuilt ten times better. To think that all of this happened over

the span of two years, he could hardly believe it if it wasn't for the fact he had lived through said period.

Not like the mastermind behind the scenes was unknown, no, the exact opposite, people didn't lose the occasion to chant her praises, to glorify her name through the street as if she was a goddess among mortal men.

Renner the Miracle Worker, Renner the Wise, Renner the Golden, and many other titles that reached every corner of the kingdom seeing how his own territory's citizens didn't shy away from indulging the titles.

After more than two years of absence from the scene he could confirm that the worship for that demon child was not a mere illusion, unlike when the older nobles had the peasants sing their praise with penance if refused, these people truly believed that the princess was on their side.

Fools, all of them, that monster wearing the face of an innocent child was only on her own side. She played the game well, adjusting to the new shift of power in the streets where the ones who used to shy away from the spotlight now walked with their heads held high.

But even in his despising of the girl, he could not deny the masterful strike. How she managed to completely alter the political spectrum of the entire kingdom when she wasn't even ten, when no one would have even considered her a pawn, let alone one of the players.

She threw them all into chaos blindly, they all retreated back to their domains in fear of losing their standing, and in the meantime

she proceeded to take the entire cake for herself without anyone getting in her way.

A plan that put all his previous attempts to seed a civil war to shame. Even he was blindsided, thinking all of this a move from the accursed caster, not noticing who was lurking in his large shadow for the longest time. But he had no longer doubts about the nature of this mastermind, the last year's events had all confirmed his worst fears.

The third princess was making her claim for the throne known for anyone who had the eyes to see, and she was being backed by possibly the most dangerous man on the face of the continent.

Oh, if you asked everyone would tell that the princess was just backing her eldest brother's claim, they would say what a dutiful princess who loved her country she was, they would all be ignorant to the true purpose behind her moves. He would sooner eat his own robes than believe for an instant someone like her would just be satisfied with remaining under an utter fool like Barbro.

Not that he had any interest in interfering with whatever was being planned. He was retired from his younger foolish days of scheming for an empty chair. He even buried the axe of war with Seven Hands, finding a middle ground in ensuring peace in his territory.

The only reason why he was at all in this snake pit of a city was only due to his son's condition and the chance of healing it with a ritual, a ritual that costed him an arm and a leg and then some more, but money was not something he was unwilling to sacrifice if it meant his son's future health.

“Lord Raeven, we are almost there.”

His thoughts were interrupted by the driver, a retired adventurer who served as his and his son’s bodyguard.

For all he would have liked to directly reach the temple and get this over with, he would still have to follow noble etiquette first and pay homage to the king and, since this was his son’s first time in the capital, he would have to present him to the court as well.

A waste of time he would have to indulge himself into regardless of his feelings, after all causing a scandal after just arriving in the capital was the last thing he needed at the moment.

As soon as the carriage stopped he immediately stood up and picked up his son, much to the child’s amusement at being brought to his own height.

Raeven had no intention of transporting him all the way to the throne room, as such a scene would only corroborate the rumors that certainly circled around his son’s health. But he couldn’t risk having Rifan walk all the way as that might have the same result of exposing his son’s poor condition.

He walked through the corridors, escorted by servants he never saw before, not that he knew every single face working here in the castle but, for some reason, he had the impression that the entire staff had gone through a complete overhaul over the last years. No doubt these ones knew whose ear they should whisper into.

He was led just in front of the throne room. Normally, as a member of the court, he should not be subjected to all this, but his absence and current circumstances clearly called for a more

formal entrance. The marquis placed down his child, allowing him to stand on his own two feet.

‘Let’s just get this over with’ he steeled his expression, the facial muscles adjusting, morphing his face into an expression he did not use in a while, though his muscle memory apparently never forgot his signature pleasant fake smile he used to sport all the time.

“Papa looks funny.”

Those words, uttered with such joy by his own child made it hard for him to not lose his composure there and then. It was a lucky thing he had retired from his former ambitions, he had no idea how he would have managed to carry on otherwise.

He heard his name being announced and the doors opening. ‘Showtime’ he forced his expression once more as he stepped forward, one last curtesy needing to be obliged.

{Vulmitar’s P.O.V.}

The Frost Dragon feasted upon the cow as his group sat by the campfire just outside the capital. They were currently having a meeting to organize their next expedition, something that had been in the making ever since they fought that old human.

He shivered at the sole memory, if it wasn’t for Arche and Rayne he might have been scarred for life by one of those powerful fire spells she used against him. Not to mention the dangerous undead she summoned who even managed to give a hard time to Zaryusu, Riyuro, Leinas, and Lakyus combined.

Speaking of his two fellow magical scholars, the two have been flying around with him for the better part of the day and were now currently resting on his back. To say he wasn’t envious of their

achievement in reaching the 3rd tier would have been a lie, but he also felt a sense of comradery even stronger than before, now that the three of them could dominate the sky side by side. Not to mention the fact those two brought back all their notes from their time in the empire for him to study.

“According to this map, one of the Swords of Darkness should be somewhere around the Wyvern Riders tribes’ territory, it is quite the journey, but I think it should be worth it to recover such an artifact.”

Lakyus pointed at a certain delimited area on the map.

“Boss, remind me why we are following the old fart’s instructions again?”

Questioned the former king of the Quagoa who did not seem thrilled at the prospect of such a voyage.

“Well... I kind of want that sword...”

The blonde human muttered under her breath as a blush took over her features.

“And besides! We are adventurers! So it is only natural for us to go on adventures like these!”

She tried to recompose herself even though her excuse sounded very hollow and her true motivation was still pretty clear. Not that Vulmitar minded the reason to begin with, all he wanted right now was to achieve the 3rd tier almost a century before his own father did.

“I think this would make for a good chance of creating bonds with the tribes as they seem to be quite isolationist in nature.”

Added Zaryusu much to Lakyus’ excitement.

“Exactly! Good one Zaryusu! You completely read my mind!”

The young knight exclaimed while slapping the lizardman’s back energetically.

“Lakyus...”

The one who called her name was none other than the blonde caster currently perched on the dragon’s back.

“You are a terrible liar...”

Finished the brown-haired boy lying next to the blonde caster.

“Don’t even start, you two!”

She pointed an accusatory finger in the two casters’ direction who, in all response, just grinned like mischievous cats.

“Arche, I think Lakyus is about to drag us across the continent to get a sword only because she thinks she would look cool with it.”

Rayne said to his companion in a mocking tone.

“Rayne, for once I think you are precisely right, our leader is a vain girl who has a thing for dark blades.”

The imperial noble agreed loudly with a nod prompting Lakyus to hide bury her very much red face in her hands.

“It is okay my lady, many legendary heroes were said to have... very singular fashion senses.”

Leinas added trying to console their young leader but only managed to elicit a groan of protest from this last one.

“Not you too, Leinas.”

Lakyus muttered out from behind her hands.

“Sorry my lady, your reactions are just too adorable.”

The imperial knight excused herself with a small smile.

“Okay! That is enough! Have some respect for your leader!”

Lakyus tried to go on a counterattack.

“Ah, my lady, are you perhaps under the influence of your new blade again?”

Vulmitar tilted his head at that as it was the first time he ever heard of a weapon that could influence the wielder, he was about to ask about it when he noticed Lakyus turning completely red.

“Y-you promised y-you would not b-bring that up!”

The girl stuttered out as she seemed particularly embarrassed by whatever memory Leinas brought up.

“Now, if you are all finished teasing the boss about her... fantasies...”

Riyuro interrupted the scene with a matter-of-fact tone as Lakyus’ head whipped in his direction.

“Y-you knew?! How?!”

She cried out in absolute horror.

“Didn’t you know? We Quagoa have very good hearing.”

The demi-human said while shrugging off the question.

“NOOOOOOO!!!”

The desperate cry would have been worrying if it wasn’t so damn comical coming from the human girl who now seemed on the verge of tears.

“I feel like we have been excluded from a very nice joke, care to enlighten us?”

Asked the blonde caster from Vulmitar's back.

"It is quite amusing actually, you see--"

Leinas could not even begin her retelling of the events that Lakys hands were all over her mouth trying to gag her.

"Don't you dare! You promised!"

The desperate blonde roared at the older human.

"Awww! Something that can embarrass Lakys to this point... now I really need to know!"

Rayne added as he slid down Vulmitar's wing, toughing the ground once more.

"No! You do not!"

The blonde swordswoman vehemently denied.

"Now, now, Lakys, comrades should share each other's moments, even if they are embarrassed about them... isn't that what good friends would do?"

Zaryusu teased the blonde human jokingly.

"Not you too, Zaryusu!"

Lakys cried out horrified.

At this point the frost dragon had no idea what was happening anymore but his interest was piqued, and like every other time, he made his curiosity known.

"I have to agree with Rayne and Arche, this now seems quite like the interesting tale."

It was his turn to receive a death stare from the young human who seemed ready to combust one moment or another judging by the color of her face.

“I have been betrayed! Traitors! The lot of you! This is a mutiny!”

She protested as tears gathered in her eyes. But it was to no avail as her dark secret was about to be revealed whether she liked it or not.

{Ro-Lente’s castle}

{Renner’s P.O.V.}

‘What a nuisance’ the third princess could not help but scoff at the letter in her hands. A letter from a certain emperor who seemed to have gotten the wrong idea about who was in charge here.

She crumpled the paper and threw it into the fire, perfectly centering the fireplace from a good five meters away. The result of her training under Lakyus.

She had no delusion of ever becoming a great swordswoman like her friend. She had no desire nor time to invest in any possible natural skill she may possess with the blade, being able to decently handle a dagger would be enough to protect herself if it came to it.

Not that she thought she would ever need to, but as Satoru always said, being unprepared when you could have a plan is the first step toward defeat.

Exactly like a certain emperor just did right now. Certainly she did not expect him to support her proposal for equal treatment of all races recognizing themselves as citizens, no, the empire who still allowed slavery between their borders would certainly not

support such a law. But to send her a personal letter where he advised her to change course of action? Did the idiot lose part of his brain alongside some of his hair?

‘Follow the teaching of the gods... what a load of bullshit’ she couldn’t help but wonder if she overestimated the fool’s intelligence, or lack thereof apparently.

As if the temple could do anything at all! All they did for the last couple years was bitch and moan whenever she or Satoru took away another piece of their so-called influence.

By now, no one using hailing magic under the protection of Seven Hands had to fear anything from the temple.

Oh, they tried at first, they sent their little punitive strikes against Seven Hands. All they managed to do was to make the dragon turn in their direction.

They did not appreciate the consequences of their own brazen actions once their head-priests started disappearing one by one, never to be seen again.

Strangely no more strikes happened after that.

The temple had acted like a gang of thugs for far too long, it was about time someone put those old rats in their place, Satoru did a splendid job as always.

And like any violent thug who was publicly beaten and humiliated before everyone, their word from then on meant little more than horseshit.

Oh, they tried to appeal to the king, but her father suddenly found himself far too busy to listen to the ramblings of the holy men who looked more like beggars every day that passed.

That is what you get when 90% of your income is based on the misery of the population.

The last nail in the coffin arrived when Lakys asked her to help her promote her racial equality laws. Not that Renner found them particularly appealing, or deserving of the time they would require, but when appealed, her Satoru showed a certain degree of support for the idea, and so she got at work.

Oh, that made the temple mad, their public ramblings... ops, she meant sermons... intensified tenfold ever since the first law was proposed.

They used all the little influence they still had to try and get in her way. Not that she cared seeing as she had already taken in account for the law to be rejected at first, this was only a seed that would take many years and good watering to flower. So all the ruckus the temple made was completely useless and just a waste of precious resources on their side.

She was sure the archbishop would have a premature death via stroke when the final bill came out.

Oh, look at her, she was so bored she had to entertain herself with bullying little bugs who mistook a lit match for the sun.

It would have been a pitiful scene if it wasn't for the fact such emotions were beneath her.

But tormenting the doomed was all the entertainment she got while she was working on her oaf of a brother. And wasn't that going swimmingly! The fool was receptive enough, but convincing him of anything at all was such a pain! She never had the displeasure of working with anyone so stubborn and egocentric before.

All her ideas had to pass through his thick head to make them look like they were his own, that was the only way to get him to do what was needed. Unfortunately this method had the side-effect of modifying her initial ideas, sometimes to the point the final outcome was unrecognizable from the original.

She was casting pearls before swine right there, and that was a compliment.

‘Maybe I should have worked with Zanak’ the thought hit her momentarily before she completely shut it down. No, her second brother had little to no charisma, and he was far too cautious to take her ideas at face value and not overthink them. Of the two of them, he would have certainly made for the better king, she might have even supported him in exchange of a tranquil life with her beloved.

But her Satoru taught her better than that. Do not request, just take, and if anyone protests, show them what it means to mouth off to you.

Make the best of what you have and live with pride.

That was probably the best advice she ever received from her beloved.

She should have never tried to fit in a world that was not made for her great form, she should have instead beaten the world till it accommodated her form and then some to make sure she was comfortable.

She heard knocking on her door, who might be at this hour? She was just waiting for her evening chamomile before going to bed, and the servants had a certain way of knocking at her door. The only one who would ignore protocol was Lakys, but the two of

them had bidden each other goodbye for a while just that afternoon.

“Come in.”

The blonde princess said as her hands reached under her gown where a sharp dagger was strapped to her thigh.

The door opened to reveal none other than her older sister. The figurative thorn in her side, Alysanne.

“Good evening, sister dear, what do I owe this late visit to?”

She greeted the second princess with an elegant bow worth of her status.

“A fine evening to you.”

That tense answer was all the response she got. Not that she expected more, the two of them have never shared any bonds, and she might be able to count on both hands the times they spoke, and she would still have fingers left.

To be completely honest, she had always despised her second sister more than her oldest one. At least Carine, that bitch, had the will to do something with her life, unlike Alysanne who could only wallow in her misery born of incompetence.

Her distaste did only grow fouler when she was betrothed to the one person she loved more than everything in this world, no matter the fact that said person had little interest in her sister, the sole fact she could claim the title as his betrothed made Renner’s blood boil.

The only reason that stopped her from stabbing that thief here and now was the knowledge that in just a little more time, the betrothal

would no longer be needed and Satoru would again walk the world as a free man. Her free man.

She tried to ignore the violet-eyed princess as she took place opposite to her at her tea table. ‘Soon, soon all shall fall into place’ she thought taking a deep breath to calm her nerves.

“I know what you are trying to do, sister.”

Alysanne spat out, putting most of her venom on the last word. Renner feigned ignorance, even if the stupid girl somehow managed to get a hint of her plan, there was nothing she could do.

“I have no idea what you may be referring to.”

She just continued her innocent act, much to the clear annoyance of her older sibling.

“I don’t know how you convinced father to send me as a delegate to discuss future commerce for the magical item market in the empire, but your scheme to send me away from Satoru will not work!”

The second princess continued as Renner remained passive at her words.

“An interesting theory, as the member of the royal family with more experience in that field I just thought you were the better pick for the job.”

She calmly explained as her eyes never left Alysanne’s who, in all response, glare back harder.

“I know your game, you little demon, I can see it in your eyes, those very eyes you use to fool everyone around you... I bet your are burning with hatred for me, oh, I wonder how much green with envy you would get without that mask of apathy... at the

knowledge that the one you are so much obsessed with is meant for another.”

The words were a clear taunt, a provocation to make her lose her composure and do something she would regret later on. An admirable attempt, even though her face remained impassive, Renner could not help but close her left hand around the hilt of her hidden dagger.

“I don’t know what you hope to accomplish with this delay, but whatever it is, I assure you, it will fail... you can try and separate me from Satoru all you want... but the fact remains that he will never see you as anything more than a child, no matter what kind of twisted fantasy you have envisioned in that sick head of yours.”

The venomous words flowed out of the second princess’ mouth without pause.

‘I’m going to kill her! I’m going to kill her! I’m going to kill her! I’m going to kill her! I’M GOING TO KILL HER! I’M GOING TO KILL HER! I’M GOING TO KILL HER!...’ those words looped in Renner’s head as every single muscle in her body tensed up and the desire to use the dagger she was basically strangling in her hand grew by the second.

The two princesses glare openly at each other.

“And to think I even pitied you at some point... but you are just a conniving rat who aims to take what doesn’t belong to her, exactly like HER!”

Renner felt her mask slip for a moment at those words as she made to unsheathe her dagger, damn the consequences!

Exactly in that instant someone else opened her door as a maid strolled inside with smoking hot chamomile on her tray.

That instant saved Alysanne's life as Renner regained control over her raging emotions, and she settled back on her seat which she had barely raised from with the intent of stabbing to death a dozen times the bitch right in front of her.

"My princesses, I apologize for the intrusion."

The maid bowed to them before she began serving the hot beverage to them both.

To be completely honest, Renner didn't even hear her knock, the rage caused by that bitch's words must have caused her to momentarily lose her senses.

The two waited in silence for the maid to finish and leave the room before any of them spoke.

"I advise you to watch your back from today on... sister, karma is a cruel mistress, and I would hate for rumors half as hurtful as those you just spat to come your way."

Renner said as she added a spoonful of sugar to her chamomile, her left now placed on the table and no longer coiling around the hilt of a dagger.

"Keep up your mask as much as you want, tomorrow I will talk to father and I will have him prepare the wedding by the time I come back from the empire... whatever you have planned will fail... just accept your position in Satoru's life, it will make you happier in the long run."

By now Renner completely buried her emotions inside her heart, she could not risk losing control once more.

"Is this all you had to say?"

She asked with all the indifference she could muster which, much to her satisfaction, was quite a lot.

She made to grab her porcelain cup but a gloved, slender hand preceded her, stealing it from under her nose.

“Just stay in your lane... and be a good girl.”

With those words Alysanne downed the cup she just stole from her and turned around to leave the room.

Renner’s eyes remained fixed on the empty cup long after the second princess left, the tight knot around her heart slowly coming undone until the full blunt of her suppressed emotion hit her with the power of a dragon lord.

She shot up completely livid and kicked over the table sending the empty and full cups flying and smashing on the ground as she was overtaken by her rage.

Without uttering a sound, she grabbed her chair and began to smash it against the downed table until both snapped from the strength of her hits.

Still burning in silent cold rage, she threw away the remains of the object that once was a chair.

Without hesitation she unsheathed her dagger and began to violently stab the surface of her wooden table which had mostly survived her beating till that point.

She continued to stab for those that felt like hours as the words of that bitch repeated on loop in her mind.

‘WHO DOES SHE THINK SHE IS?! TAKING WHAT IS MINE!
I WILL SOONER KILL EVERY LAST LIVING BEING IN THE
CAPITAL BEFORE I LET ANYONE GET BETWEEN ME

AND MY SATORU! SHE IS DONE FOR! I'M GOING TO HAVE HER KILLED! NO! THAT IS TOO GOOD! I WILL FIRST DESTROY HER MIND! BY THE END OF IT SHE WILL BEG TO BE KILLED! I WILL MAKE SURE TO WATCH HER BRAK! STEP BY STEP! I WILL STRIP AWAY HER HUMANITY! AND WHEN THERE IS NOTHING LEFT I WILL SKIN HER ALIVE MYSELF! OVER AND OVER! UNTIL SHE WILL NOT EVEN KNOW HER NAME ANYMORE! AND ONLY THEN WILL SHE BE ALLOWED TO DIE!' she was completely lost in her bloodlust when the wooden surface that once served as a table snapped in half from her countless stabs.

She slowly stood up, her head was pulsing at the same rhythm as her heart, she couldn't remember a single moment in her life when she experienced such rage to the point of losing herself, body and mind, to it.

She left the dagger slip from her grip and clatter on the ground as she felt a sudden tiredness take over her body.

She dragged herself to her bed, not even caring to undress as she collapsed on it.

Her mind flew through her plans. How she planned to send her bitch of a sister away to the empire, where the emperor would fall in love with her at first sight and immediately demand for her hand from her father... of course she had already made an arrangement with Jircniv, she made it clear that if he didn't go through with her plan she had the means of ruining him and have him deposed from his position by the end of the year. After all she held all the cards in her hand, the empire was already in a political

turmoil due to the emperor lack of military initiative, it would have been so easy to rock the boat and have a civil war start.

Maybe that outrageous letter she had received was some kind of weird way of his to tell her to go fuck herself now that she thought about it.

Either way, she knew he knew he had no choice but to obey. After all even her father would not pass the chance to link Re-Estize and Baharuth through holy matrimony and so finally bring an end to this two-hundred years rivalry.

And when he would have to lose face with Satoru by annulling the betrothal. She, the dutiful third princess, would be ready to take her sister's place as Satoru's bride, and all would fall into place.

But now... now she didn't want anything else apart from seeing that brown-haired bitch dead at her feet!

She tried to calm herself, she had no need to lose herself to her rage once more. The plan was already set in motion, she will have what she wants, and if the emperor didn't go along with her orders... she could still arrange an accident when that harlot returned home.

Yes... that sounded nice... either way, she would never have to see that face nor hear her voice ever again in the lifespan.

With those dreams of perfect futures and murders in mind she closed her eyes and soon lost herself to the unconscious world.

...

She was stirred awake by loud screaming coming from the corridor outside her room.

She just turned around, trying to ignore the ruckus and get some more sleep when the door to her room slammed open.

‘Who dares?!’ she asked herself, annoyed at sudden intrusion of her privacy.

She was about to demand for the intruder’s intention when she noticed none other than Gazef standing at her door, his black eyes fixed on her, filled with relief, seemingly uncaring at the sight of her half-destroyed room, which was not touched since the evening before.

“Gazef, what is the meaning of this?”

She asked the Warrior Captain, trying to not betray any emotion behind her words.

The right hand of the king hesitated before finally opening his mouth.

“Please come with me Princess Renner, you must be brought to the Throne Room as soon as possible, orders of His Majesty the King.”

He said while Renner’s brain began to run one kilometer per second as it was trying to make sense of what was happening and how Gazef managed to get here before any of her servants reported whatever was happening.

“I will come, but I need a more in-depth explanation... now.”

She made to raise from her bed and slowly reach the older man as she demanded for more information with all the royal authority she could muster in her tone.

The strongest knight of the Kingdom seemed to hesitate once more before he knelt down to her height to whisper in her ear.

“It is Princess Alysanne... she is dead.”

A.N.

Boom! Bet you did not expect this! All was being so peaceful, wasn't it? Everyone was having a good time... and now we have a dead princess in our hands.

Now I am really curious to hear your ideas and theories so make sure to leave a comment / review!

Till next time! Stay safe!