

## Death Magic 31

### [Chapter 31](#)

A run in with Thunderstain

“Leader of Thunderstain, I wish you no harm,” He spoke sternly.

“Don’t kid with me, boy. A weakling such as you doesn’t have the right to look down on me.”

“How interesting, I was the one who slew your so-called top assassins, do you wish for us to partake in a little dance?”

“You’ve been eager for a fight since you’ve entered this garrison, so how shall we fix this quandary?”

“Tis very simple,” \*Death Element, activate; Unleash Aura.\* A powerful gust exploded out of Staxius, within his right palm he played with a shadowy fireball which burned in a white and black flame. Eyes firmly stuck onto this leader’s face, he stood. The power he slowly let out increased in strength little by little.

“Ma’am, is everything alright?” A group of fully armed swordsmen stormed the medium-sized tent. Before them he stood, strength increasing by the minute. “WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, ATTAC...”

“Halt at once!” The leader shouted, hearing her voice risen to such a high tone, everyone was stunned. “But ma’am...” The man who seemed in charge of that little platoon spoke out. “I believe I’ve read your intentions, everyone please set out and don’t let anyone any closer.” Her voice went from strong and mighty to helpless and shy.

“I will not falter in front of this man who dares to defile my lady, I shall dispose of him.” Persistent, he unsheathed his sword and pointed it at Staxius who hadn’t budged. Tip close to the back of his head, the man who seemly held the advantage spoke, “Heed my call defiler, I challenge you to a duel.” Throwing his sword in front of Staxius, he officially issued the duel.

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“What a shame, and here I thought we were going to converse as civilized humans as opposed to the trash you call your subordinates. Very well, if tis a duel you want,” He turned around, “It’s a duel you’ll get,” he leaned and whispered.

\*Gulp,\* The anger in his seemingly soft tone shook the foolish challenger to his core. “Hear me, members of Thunderstain, if you wish to protect your leader’s virtue then I’ll dare every one of you to come at me with all your might,” He smirked and left the tent.

“Isac,” she sighed as she shook her head in disappointment.

“W-what is it, ma’am,” Cheek all flushed he replied.

“YOU FOOL,” she shouted, “That man whom you just challenge has no remorse nor pity for killing man such as you, I’d even go so far to say that he enjoys it.”

“But ma’am, he threatened your integrity,” Adamant, he stood. “That’s not the issue at hand,” She sighed even more. “What is done cannot be undone, with this emblem guiding our path, we shan’t fall now,” Holding up the crest that sparkled as the wind blew in alongside the light from the outside.

“Everyone, get ready for battle, this will not be a one on one but a full-on war against that brat who dared think so perversely about me.” She kept a strong appearance.

Meanwhile, outside, everyone felt the tension coming from the tent. When Staxius stepped out, the remaining members were fully on guard, without provocation they remained dormant like wolves.

“Psst, egh Undrar?” Staxius called out telepathically.

“Yes, what is it?”

“The thing is, I might have unwillingly started a war with Thunderstain.”

“YOU DID WHAT? Where are you this instant?”

“No need to worry about my safety, just tell Fenrir to get ready, I’ll be calling on her soon.”

“Only Fenrir, what about the silver guardians?”

“Oh, leave them be, I don’t want to trouble those girls anymore, also keep an eye on Millicent, she’s important.”

“Give me a moment, I’ll call on her,”

“Hold up, how’s Eira?”

“How the heck can you worry so much about this babe, it’s not even been twelve hours yet. She sleeping at the moment.”

“Good, thanks for being awesome, love you, little sis,” He chuckled.

“Screw you too, big bro.”

Sat on a double bed, Undrar shared a room with Adelana. The new place they checked in was neither to expensive nor cheap, the perfect balance. The room was well lit, the furniture was old yet seemed brand new, the staff here really took care of everything. Using her small feet, Undrar scurried out of the spacious room. \*Knock, knock,\* “Fenrir, it’s me, Viola.”

“Hold on a moment,” Right next to the room where Eira slept, Fenrir and Millicent shared another room. Footsteps grew louder and closer, without losing a beat, the door flung open. “What is it, Viola?” Fenrir was supercharged with energy thanks to a hot bath. Signaling her to come closer, Undrar whispered, “Brother has told you to get ready for battle, he’ll be calling on you soon.” Hidden, Alyson overheard everything. Instantly after the message was delivered, she vanished. Clueless, Undrar headed back.

“Adelana,” Almost like a snap of the fingers, Alyson whispered. Taken by surprise, Adelana jumped with a spell ready to cast. “Oh, it’s only you,” A sigh of relief followed.

“You should not drop your guard like that,” Alyson replied.

“What is the matter?” She stood naked inside Ancret and Annet’s room. “Master is going to battle,” Alyson’s expression remained solid as a rock. “He’s doing what?” Worried, without losing any time, she got on some clothes and called an emergency meeting.

“I’ve received news that our master is going to battle, however, we haven’t been called. Thus, my assumption that he doesn’t want us to be involved. Despite that, we must honor our vow to protect him, Alyson and Ancret. I want you two to go watch over him, now scram.” Like shadows, they all vanished.

Back at the camp, the wind who frequently blew got serious. The temperature dropped considerably; the gust picked up in intensity. Above, the clouds covered the sun as if to prevent it from seeing the massacre that was looming. The forest seemed to cry, leaves rattling, dust getting picked up from the ground where he stood, the duel was ready. \*Crack...crack...crack,\* Staxius menacingly cracked his knuckles slowly. He made sure everyone saw him doing it.

“Lady Thunderstain, do you really wish to partake in this childish battle you call an honorable duel?”

He spoke, breaking the long silence.

“I’m only following the advice you gave me and my men,” She smirked. Her armor was black and red, shield with her precious emblem and a short sword with a rounded handle, it looked more like a magical staff than a sword.

“I see, this duel has turned into a siege, then let me up the stakes. This battle will be a fight to the death, if at any point you wish to leave, then out of mercy, I’ll allow it. However, I’m also putting up this,” Held up, the dragon insignia, majestic and pretty. “I’ll fight with my dragon crest up for grabs, I’ll suggest that you do the same. I mean, there isn’t a hope in hell for me to win this, up against such a considerable army, I’m but a mere fly.”

“Ma’am,” Isac whispered, “I’ll advise you to not fall into his game. Nonetheless, I’ve sent scouts ahead, there are no worries about reinforcements, so take up swords and accept his conditions, we have to risk it, attaining that crest is vital.”

“I accept your request, in case you win, then I, Rose Edelina shall comply and hand over my crest.”

“EXCELLENT, I’m pleased to hear such soothing words, now then, shall we start?”

Covered behind a line of men forming an arrow, and boxed in by the rest, Staxius stood, trapped like a rodent. “CHARGE,”

\*Death element, activate, UNLEASH AURA,\* A violent black mist shot out of him, his eyes began burning with a fierce flame. Everyone felt his power, for a second, all the warriors halted. “DON’T FALTER MEN, HE’S BUT A COWARD,” Rose screamed from behind. Encouraged by their leader, everyone pounced.

“Should I kill them all instantly with Tactus Interitus or no...” Decisions, decisions. He thought while dodging every attack effortlessly. “It’s not that I don’t like them, Thunderstain seems like a good ally to have at the ready. Sadly, we are beyond the point of no return, I’ve schemed everything since we entered Dundee. The merchant, willingly getting abducted, now what, my plan was to kill and rob them.

Up close, they seem reasonable. If only my emotions weren't in the way, I'd have killed them in a heartbeat."

"FUCK IT," he screamed, \*FENRIR COME FORTH,\* annoyed from all the pointless dodging, the bloodlust got the better of him. Emerging from an icy white portal, Fenrir, in her giant and menacing wolf form. Confused, they all fell back. "Rose, do you still wish to fight me?" Staxius vanished from the battlefield and was now behind their leader. Hearing him behind her, she screamed like a little girl. "LADY ROSE," Isac shouted, "MEN CHARGE THAT WOLF," he ordered. Furious, everyone obeyed, "Rose," he whispered even softer, "Look in front, this battle is pointless, I'm fighting my urge to slay every single one of them. Not Fenrir though, if your men so much as touch her, then this field will be covered with the blood of your warriors."

"LADY, DON'T GIVE IN, STAND STRONG FOR US," Isac screamed as he ran back.

"I'll give you five seconds," Under pressure, humans cracked faster than stepping on an egg.

"FOUR," his scream added the overall load. Rose was confused, scared and clueless, all she wanted was to save her comrades. "THREE," Isac's voice became the only thread which kept her strong. "TWO," Tears began to roll down her cheeks, "LADY ROSE, I LOVE YOU," He confessed. Her eyes glimmered with hope and happiness; dark arts was activated the moment Staxius walked in. Everyone's emotions were read like a book, "ONE," he understood clearly that the reason Isac became her strength was because of her love for him, unknown yet present, "I GI..." Staxius heard her surrender but chose to ignore it. \*Slash,\* Neck sliced like a hot knife going through butter, "FENRIR, KILL THEM ALL," he shouted. \*AHO,\* Swing after swing, like waves crashing against rocks, her men fell like pebbles. Death and death, blood pouring like a flooded waterfall. He promised, and he delivered. Out of respect for her former lover, Staxius caught his body instead of letting it fall down.

Catching the short and weak body of Isac who still breathed, Staxius delivered him into her hand. "I told you, this fight is a meaningless one, a duel you dared issued against me, tis is the world we live in right now. You've seen how ruthless I can be, now imagine this but ten times worse, that is the state of things in Dorchester, my birthplace. Honestly, I don't care for your feelings, now I'll take that crest." In a single motion, he took the necklace and walked towards the beast whose snow and blue glorious fur turned bloody red. "Good job," He petted and caressed her ears.

Once again he stood in the middle of corpses, nothing really changes does it. In front, Rose held Isac tightly. This was probably the last time they ever met, awake thanks to adrenaline, Isac caressed Rose's moist cheeks. She cried, tears fell lazily onto his face. Each drop resounded, he felt all her pain and suffering. "D-don't cry, t-this is m-my \*cough, cough,\* fault." Using his bloodied hand, he tried wiping away Rose's tears but failed as his body refused to obey. His strength faded, caressing her cheeks made him feel at ease. "Isac... don't leave..." She whispered. Gathering all his remaining will power, he spoke for the last time, "Please don't cry about this loss my lady, this duel was fought and won by that man who stands beside a god. I wish I could have remained by you for eternity however, I'm at peace. My unrequited love was finally returned, at last, my death isn't such a bad thing, my lady Rose, I love you." Like cutting off a thread, his body fell, for a man of his size, he was heavy. Sadness and anger filled Rose's body. In a fit of rage or a quest for vengeance, she rushed Staxius. The sound of something piercing a fleshy body was heard, muffled, Staxius spoke, "Wow, \*cough,\*" blood sprayed onto her face, "You've stabbed me," Surprised, the confused Rose fell backward. "Why didn't you dodge?"

“What’s the point, I’ve killed or rather slaughtered your family. Isac was a good man,” Nonchalantly, he removed the sword, blood gushed out. “You see, I can’t be killed that easily, I hope this opened your eyes,”

\*Snap,\* Staxius smirked under the cover of the cloud who began crying. “What a day,” He laughed.

## [Chapter 32](#)

### An agreement

The sound of Staxius snapping his fingers awoke everyone. Rose stood, unable to move due to confusion. Moments ago, her whole gang was wiped out. A tear unwillingly escaped her eyes. “Ma’am, don’t cry, I shall defeat this defiler in your stead.” A voice spoke, familiar and peaceful. Sternly fixed and eyeing Staxius down, Isac stood, sword in hand, waiting.

“What is happening?” Her stomach felt weird, her head began aching, her body gave in, she collapsed. “Dear Lord, how can someone be so feeble,” Staxius sighed. Rose’s sudden faint went unnoticed. “FIGHT,” one of her men exclaimed, the battle restarted. “Fenrir, that was a job well done, now you may return, I shall join everyone later.”

One against a mini-army, \*Poof,\* Everyone charged. Simultaneously, smoke bombs began exploding everywhere. One by one, they all got knocked out. “Phew, just like I thought, these guys aren’t that strong. I do wonder how the illusion spell Fenrir and I conjured felt, I did imagine the whole scene, however, did it leave a psychological scar I wonder.”

Behind him, as he walked, the smoke faded thus revealing a pile of unconscious bodies; some on top of each while others scattered around. In the distance, faint but distinct, the presence of two skilled individuals was felt. The attempts of making themselves invisible were fruitless, the moment they reached the garrison, “Alyson and Ancret, get over here this instant.” A voice came from the inside.

“Guess we’ve been found out,” Ancret quietly voiced her disappointment.

Inside, the sight of bodies lying about without a single drop of blood took them by surprise. “M-master?” Alyson tried speaking but chose to remain silent.

“Stop gawking and get over here, both of you,” Impatient he restrained himself from reprimanding them. “Y-yes,”

They ran, “Ancret please heal this woman and leave the other guys to Alyson.” Rose slept quietly on Staxius’s lap as he provided her body some support against the rough ground. \*Healing element activate; Full body recovery,\* A green mist levitated Rose’s body off his lap, she was floating without any help. The scars she received prior from meeting Staxius got healed as well. Without any warning, the spell was finished and her body fell. “Ouch, my head,” She pouted. “I see the lady is awake,” He spoke monotonously. “Ancret, please if you have some mana left go heal the people I critically injured, got a bit carried away there.” He pulled out his tongue jokingly. “You goht a bit carried awayhh,” She whispered into his ears all in hopes of arousing him. “I know you can’t help that sort of behavior, but do be careful, people may often mistake your playfulness and take you seriously,” He pinched her cheek.

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"W-what the hell did I wake up too, i-is this a daughter father spat?" Half-heartedly she spoke.

"Good, your awake," With a single glance to Ancret, she knew things were about to get serious and left. "Now then lady Thunderstain, I do hope you remember what happened?" Her pupils shrunk; her expression changed from clueless to mortified. She was frightened beyond human comprehension, and at the root of such intense emotions stood Staxius; smirking with the blood of her comrades over his visage.

"Ha-ha, you remembered didn't you,"

"W-why a-are you h-holding me, aren't you going f-finish the job? You've killed all my crew; I've got nothing to live for."

"Stop with the helpless heroine act," He exclaimed. With a single smooth movement, he forcefully grabbed her face and turned it so she could see her men alive and well.

"What you saw was a premonition Fenrir and I conjured up. I won't go into the details, but your men really did die, now do you understand why I chose to have a private discussion as opposed to this?"

"But why didn't you kill them for real? I thought you enjoyed the sight of blood and carnage.

"Don't get me wrong, I can kill all of them without breaking a sweat with only a snap of my fingers. What you saw wasn't me going at full force, I have a spell which has the potential to wipe out the whole population if I just wished it."

"..." She wasn't convinced. "This is always the problem with you people, suspicious and never wanting to listen despite how courteous I try to be, fine. \*Death element activate.\* As opposed to chanting the spell internally, he spoke it out loud for only Rose to hear.

\*Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, from when you were born and till you die, I, the god of death, hold in my hands the strings which binds you to this world, by my authority, I order thy to sever said chain, spell, Tactus Interitus.\*

Index finger pointing at a random member, \*Snap,\* The man dropped instantly, "Alyson could you kindly check that man who fell down over there." He shouted.

"He's dead." She shouted back monotonously.

"Now then, lady Thunderstain or should I say Rose Edelina, how does that make you feel?" He smiled. Her body began to shake, she was trembling, "Who are you..." the sight of another death was more than she could handle. "Please... just leave me alone," She softly cried. He wiped her tears, still in his lap, he calmly spoke, "Rose, a flower whose pretty on the outside yet shrouded with thorns. Does your name reflect your personality? Are you an underhanded woman? Do you play with people just to get what you want? Are you loyal? No need to answer any of those questions, up to now, I have been testing you rigorously. I shall not go into many details, but you seem trustworthy enough."

"Testing me?" she gave up.

"Yes, no matter, I have a proposal."

"I still haven't gotten my answer about why you didn't kill my men."

“You’re still going on about that. Then, I shall indulge you this once. When I stepped foot here, I was prepared and willing to slay anyone who stood in my way. Nonetheless, imagine my surprise when I saw Thunderstain being polite and bowing as a sign of welcome. It amazed me, I didn’t want to shamelessly kill those people who are good at heart, hence the decision to torture you mentally instead.”

She sighed, “You say you want to kill people but avoid it, are you that contradicting?”

“There was a time when I slaughtered anyone who so much as look at me the wrong way, my past... Let’s not go into details, I’m not willing to unlock those memories. Back to my previous topic, I have a proposal.”

“No matter what I say, you’ve won, speak.”

“What I want is... Let’s go to a place more private and secluded.”

“Even a man like you wants to steal my virtue,” She mumbled. “Excuse you?” Staxius caught on.

“No... nothing, let’s head back inside the tent, your girls can keep watch.”

“Very well,” They stepped inside. “Follow me, this way,” Small on the outside at first glance, however, the place had a hidden trap door heading further down. The corridors were dark, no light nothing, pitch darkness. \*Click,\* A row of torches lit, the pathway was revealed at last. It was whiteish-grey, doors at regular intervals, he walked further in.

“What is this place?”

“Our sleeping quarters, we built it when Thunderstain first started up. Can’t believe it’s been ten years now.”

“Did you start it?”

“Oh no, that was my father’s handy work. Enough chitchat, my room is through that door there.” Opposing the hall as if overseeing it, her room stood, isolated and lonely. “Please enter my humble abode,” She reluctantly opened the door. “Guess it’s today I become a woman, what a joke.”

“Please, sit over there,” She pointed at her bed, “I’ll be right back,” and hurried into the what seemed to be the bathroom, the room was dimly lit, only some candles allowed him to see.

“Ok, I’m not that dense, does she think I want to indulge my lust? What a joke, wait, this is a good time to have some fun,” He laughed quietly. “From mentally assaulting her to physically breaking her and now this is just the icing on the cake.”

Armor off she stepped out of the bathroom with only a sleeping gown, most of her legs were up for display as well as her upper half. Short yet kept her treasures hidden, a men’s worst nightmare; anticipation and imagination, curiosity about what’s beneath those clothes. Her facial expression was one of someone very shy, her cheeks were flushed. As if waiting for Staxius to say something she waited. After what transpired, this was the only time Staxius truly admired her; hair in the color of chocolate, eyes almond shaped in a light-brown color, her skin was slightly tanned, it matched her face perfectly. A pointy nose and a small dot underneath the right side of her lips. Absolutely smoking, her body, on the

contrary, was hardened. You could see how much effort she put into mastering her craft, both impressed and wanting to toy with her a little more; Staxius made the first move.

Using shadow step, he dashed behind her, the wind created from his speed casually lifted the still short gown. Ashamed, she grabbed the end and stopped it from getting any higher. From behind, he slowly began lightly caressing her back using his index finger, it was so soft she could have mistaken it for a feather. The tingling sensation began to swell up with every stroke he made, her heart began beating so loudly he physically heard it. "... This is gold, it must be so hard on her, man I could just drop down and laugh, it's too fun."

\*Foo,\* He pushed her onto the bed, and followed suit. He slowly got closer to her entire body, left arm holding most of his weight, he laid atop her and leaned in closer while caressing her left side. All the new sensations she felt couldn't be contained anymore, regularly she whimpered, groaned, moaned, and desperately tried to muffle her breathing. Five minutes went by, it felt like an eternity for her. Staxius leaned even closer, "The faint scent of rose, you truly smell amazing," He bit her earlobe and stepped away.

"AHHH," she screamed. "W-what is this m-meaning of t-this?" She asked, confused by Staxius stepping away. "I'm removing my suit," He sarcastically added. \*Gulp,\* "Please be gentle, this is my first time," she didn't catch the sarcasm in his tone. He faced away and laughed silently; he could no longer hold it in. Meanwhile, Rose slowly took off her undergarment not knowing that a man was supposed to do that. Calm and having had his fill, he spoke,

"My lady Rose, please keep your panties on, I do not wish to steal your virtue. I apologize for toying with you like this, but earlier you completely misunderstood my intent when I said I wanted to be alone with you. Despite that I chose to continue that misunderstanding, however, you love someone else, I didn't wish to have intercourse with you from the start. Please keep that muscular and gentle body safe for when you do get betrothed to someone who deserves such an honor." Sincerity filled his tone.

"So, you did all that f-for fun..." Embarrassment filled her face, she was bright red.

"I don't wish to pursue this any longer but if you want to hear the details, then you were splendid with that shyness and innocent persona, my heart nearly skipped a beat."

"STOP, STOP, STOP, please, d-don't'," She was dying, so ashamed she wanted to run away.

"Here," He threw some clothes lying around, "Can't converse with you semi-nude."

Facing downwards, still ashamed, she spoke, "I'm d-done."

"No need to worry about what happened any longer," he patted her head playfully.

"Now then, at first I wanted to ask you to hand over that crest. Now though, I've changed my mind, all I want from you is a non-aggression pact, I want us to be allies. You've got connections all around Hidros which will come in handy. In return, I shall aid you if you ever seek me. A favor for a favor, if you wish me to kill the king, even the emperor to that matter, I'll gladly do it. All I want in return is your trust and belief that I, Staxius Haggard, is a man of his word. I won't force you to trust me, rather, I'll earn it by my actions. I apologize for killing one of your men earlier, tis was necessary to prove a



point. Now then, will you become my ally or enemy? I've got a dream that I wish to be fulfilled. I can't do it without you, Rose." At that moment, a bit of Staxius's true personality seeped out.

"Lord Staxius, you've put me through hell just to give in at the last instant? What if I refuse?"

"I'll lea... "He tried speaking but resulted in a mumble. \*Cough,\* He cleared his throat, "Guess the premonition will turn into reality." He spoke firmly once again.

After a big exhale, she gave in, "Fine, I, Rose Edelina, am honored to become your ally. In bliss and in woe, I vow to be by your side."

"I'm honored you accepted, my Lady Rose. Please, let's make this official by joining our crests." Both Rose and Staxius bit a part of their lips and locked mouths together. The easiest way to ally a crest with another is through a blood pact between crest as well as loyalty sworn to each other. Both crests began to glow, the alliance was confirmed. On the Dragon crest, a thunder insignia joined up.

The same happened to thunder crest, a dragon insignia merged in and made it look even more impressive, but in no way did they resembled each other.'

"I personally believe that a kiss was a bit exaggerated but no matter, I'm glad to have you as an ally, Rose." He smiled and left.

"Likewise, Staxius," She touched her bottom lip, "Likewise..."

### [Chapter 33](#)

#### The Girls and Me

"Another ally made; this was totally unexpected. All that is left is heading to Krigi, maybe some armor and weapons for the silver guardians. The kiss we just shared triggered a long-lost memory. My first day at the academy, I remember doing the same thing to another girl, what was her name again? Oh Lucy, good times. I do wonder how Sophie is doing, from what I got told by Undrar, she betrayed me." The walk from Rose's room to the ladder leading into the tent was short but it took longer than expected. Unknowingly, Staxius walked straight and hit an opened door. The hall was pitch dark, stumbling, he slowly but surely arrived. "Was my life at the academy just a lie? Did it mean nothing in the long run? Should I tell Sophie that I'm back? I'm clueless, do I really want to go and meet all the people who saved me once? In their eyes I'm dead, can I allow myself to forget them and start over...?" From atop, a voice shouted; "Master, where are you?" The silver guardians were looking frantically.

Just when Staxius began climbing the wooden ladder, Rose shouted, "Wait up." She ran. Together, they went up to surface level. Since the hall was pitch black, Rose's apparel went unnoticed until they were inside the tent.

"My Lady Rose, did you forget to dress properly?" He asked after giving her a helping hand out.

"What do you mean?" She asked, confused.

"I mean, first, you don't have any undergarments on, you're practically see-through. The fact that your wearing such a thin shirt and shorts doesn't help me in any way. You see, I'm still a growing boy, I do not wish to defile you using my eyes so here," Like a gentleman, he handed her his prized suit jacket.

Simultaneously, Isac and the silver guardians entered the tent, "Ma'am," Shocked, he spoke.

"Oh my, I didn't realize our master was such a stud." Ancret jokingly added. Rose was still dazed from the prior illusion spell. While she got dressed, the only thing in her mind was that kiss, bloody yet passionate. "Stop with the pleasantries, Isac, you came at the perfect time. Please, take care of lady Rose."

"What do you mean take care?" Isac asked as Rose blushed and hid behind Staxius. "I mean take care? Do you not speak human?" He sarcastically added. "I mean, what is there to take care of, Lady Rose is practically blushing like a girl having had her first... No, you did not just steal her virtue."

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"Stop with the accusations, besides, I'm asexual. I care not for such nonsense."

"Master, it's getting late," Alyson spoke. "Ancret, please find something to cover..." Before he could finish a piece of cloth in a bundle headed for his face. "Thanks," He covered Rose and took the suit jacket.

"Staxius, when will we meet again?" She spoke while he covered her. "I dare not say, my journey is more unstable than your subordinate's heart. Please, take good care of yourself, and let's make this alliance of ours worthwhile. Also, I must ask, where is that merchant?"

"Oh, he's back in town, don't worry about the gold you took, even though it's like a fortune, you may have it, consider it a gift from the Thunderstain." She smiled.

"Thank you very much," She grabbed his collar and kissed him once more. "My, my, Rose, you've certainly grown bold, don't forget about who you truly love," Staxius whispered.

"That was unexpected, glad no one saw it," \*Dark Arts, Emotional control; Dispel.\*

"Now then, leader of Thunderstain, I wish you good luck on your future endeavors, may lady luck smile upon you." With his signature wave, he left.

"Ma'am, what did that man do to you?" Isac spoke after he left.

"Hmm, nothing really, we formed an alliance," She spoke sternly. "You foolish boy," A smile escaped,

"You've changed for the better, thanks Staxius," Isac spoke under his breath.

"Alyson, Ancret, I have a question."

"You need not ask when you speak to us, master," Ancret replied. \*Crunch, crunch,\* Dry leaves shattered when they stepped into the forest. "How did you find me?"

"Simple, we followed your scent."

"What do you mean scent, are you dogs?"

"No, not literally scent, but your presence and aura, it's unique. Also, the blood pact did help as well."

"Alright then," The sun retired for his daily rest, the moon, on the other hand, was nowhere to be

found. The night was darker than usual, they arrived at last. "Master, we'll be heading off."

"Wait for me girls, I want to see Eira first," They momentarily forgot that he had a daughter. Thus, their walk continued, Dundee at night was still as lively as at daytime. The only difference was the people, traders turned alcoholics, everyone was having fun. The occasional brawl happened here and there, close to town square, couples were getting frisky, life was good. Not far off, Adelana was spotted going inside a massive building. \*Gulp,\* "I told her to get the best room but not the most expensive one," To his surprise, Ancret showed him to another building opposing where Adelana entered. The place was spacious, very clean and neat. People there seemed dignified enough, the service looked impeccable.

"Master, we are staying here." In front of him stood a massive room, which was both a restaurant and a bar. The atmosphere was calm and peaceful, the people were well dressed. For someone like Staxius, he felt out of place though those people were but commoners. Bar to right, he walked.

"Ancret, please call onto Undrar and Fenrir for me." He asked while ordering a whiskey. "Will do," Alyson headed upstairs. Few drinks later, the whole squad descended. Most of them wore their same old clothes, he felt guilty.

"Master," As usual, Fenrir, a bombshell, shouted without a care in the world. Everyone soon surrounded him, hug after hug, he greeted all of them. "Eira did you mish me." He spoke trying to act cute, Eira giggled. "Fenrir, a job well done earlier. Without you, I couldn't have defeated all those guys, so thanks." He patted her. "Now then everyone, let's have some FOOD." They caused a scene.

The people began to feel agitated, they were displeased. Courteously, Staxius rose and spoke, "I gravely apologize for the inconvenience. However, words might not convince you just yet. Hence, Barkeeper, please bring your best wine and serve it to everyone present, it's on me."

The agitation faded into happiness, "Brother, will that not cost you?" Undrar spoke.

"Oh, don't worry, I've struck a deal with someone powerful, money isn't an issue no more. Speaking of money, I should probably go get Adelana, please ladies, go take a seat over there and order whatever food you want. Today it's my treat." Babe in arms, he played and amused her daughter until he reached the other building.

"From the looks of it, this place looks fine from the outside but I've got a bad feeling." He stepped, everyone wore expensive suits and dresses. They paid him no mind, the smell of foul play was in the air. "What is Adelana doing here?" In the distance, he spotted her, she was with some rich guy heading upstairs. Staxius decided to follow suit, "Excuse me sir, but you have no business here." Two men in black suits guarded the stairs. "Will this buy me entry?" He flashed a gold coin, the guard's eyes sparkled. A gold coin was super valuable here. "Excuse us, sir," They let him through.

"As they say, a bit of gold can get you anywhere, isn't that right Eira," He played with her even more. Inconspicuously, he erased his aura and followed Adelana. The man was fat, another sign of being well off. Black oily hair with a mustache, he had a mischievous aura surrounding him. On occasions, he would grab Adelana's waist. She just stood there as she clenched her fist. Not wanting to interrupt, he continued watching.

“Well, this might not be my place to intervene. If she wants to sell herself, who am I to stop her, live and let live I guess.” Before they entered the room, Staxius unleashed his aura willingly so she knew, he was there, then left. “Master... Sorry.” She entered. “Anyways, let’s head back.” Once again, without conjuration, he activated shadow step. Normally, to use any spell you need at least an activation word, it’s like flipping a switch to enable you to use magic. In a way it prepares your body as well, mana is one’s life-force, thus, when you use it up, it goes against the very law of nature.

“Hello everyone, I’m back.” A smile devoid of any sadness, he spent the remainder of his night in the company of his squad. They drank, ate, drank some more, of course some threw up, basically a great night. At some point during the party, Staxius booked the whole bottom floor. They had fun, a bit too much, dancing, jumping, sparring, and drinking more.

Through a window, Adelana gazed out, the upper half of her body was exposed. This wasn’t the first time she did this, it felt normal, however, guilt began to crawl up. She stared downwards, the place she was staying at looked lively unlike the dimly lit and silent room she stood in. “Miss, would you kindly get started, I don’t have much time to entertain you.” Her client spoke unwillingly. “Low born scum if it wasn’t for that lovely face, I’d have killed you already.” He got impatient. A tear flow down her face. Below, just when she turned away, he saw it, or rather, felt it. The cry for help, her soul was screaming, ‘Someone, help me,’

“Damn it, you fool,” \*Death element activate; Shadow step.\*

The fat man laid on the bed, he was fully naked. Adelana slowly got her bottom half undressed. The instant she got ready to do the deed; the door flung open. “Adelana Geus, stop this instant.” A frown turned upside down, her eyes lit up. “What is the meaning of this, \*Pang,\* A rock to the face from Staxius knocked him out cold.

“God damn it, I was planning to leave you alone, WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SHED THAT TEAR.” He spoke frustrated. “If you weren’t up to the task, why do it?” He continued his onslaught. “Are you that dense or are you plain STUPID.” The breathing calmed down. Ashamed, she could naught but cry. “You fucking idiot,” with effortless motion, he covered her up and jumped out of the window. “Adelana, listen, I truly believe in the words; live and let live. Thus, my decision to leave you alone, but you’ve proved me wrong. You’re just stubborn, I gave you enough money, why earn more? Am I that irrelevant to you, for the love of god, I’M YOUR MASTER.” \*Bam,\* He landed perfectly.

“Leave the worries about feeding you guys up to me, I did say I’ll take care of you.” His tone got gentle, “Let’s party,” Waiting for her; her sisters, Millicent, Fenrir, Undrar and Eira. Most of them were already drunk but they welcomed her with open arms. “See, no need to worry anymore.”

“T-thank y-you master,” He was nowhere to be found. “Undrar, I’ve made up my mind. I can’t deal with the silver guardians anymore, after Krigi, we are going to head our separate ways.” He spoke telepathically.

“The choice is up to you,” She accepted.

The next day came by faster than usual. Staxius slept at the old broken-down inn. “We need gear, guess we are shopping.” Plan for the day made, he headed for the other hotel. He knocked on each door, but most of them were hungover except Adelana. Grabbing Eira, he asked her to join him. “Adelana, sorry

about yesterday, I got in the way. No matter, I need your help picking out clothes for everyone. We need to stock up, Krigi is some ways off.”

“I’m sorry as well master,” Shop to shop, Staxius bought anything Adelana recommended. New clothes, accessories, potions, food. Anything you needed for a long journey. Eira finally had clothes of her own, she looked splendid. Staxius picked out a white tiger outfit, more like a pajama but it looked cute.

Back at the hotel, Fenrir wore her new undergarments and clothes. She still rocked the smart shirt and pants style, looked more like a teacher. Millicent after having gotten food and water finally began to look healthy, her face slowly got better. She spoke on time to time; the emotional scars weren’t gone yet but Staxius was working on it. Her clothes weren’t that impressive, to that fact, none of the clothes bought looked that special.

Undrar, on the other hand, wore her usual Gothic outfit. As a joke, Staxius bought her a toy magic wand, it was much taller than her, he laughed. The Geua sisters got long-sleeved shirt which matched their hairstyle.

Few days past, Staxius finally parted from the grey suit. He instead wore another grey suit which matched his old one without any of the bloodstains. Out of the four, only one golden button was left, on his journey, he sold them for food and other commodities away from his companions’ eyes as well as steal.

He chose to keep one. The suit itself looked expensive, and it was true, it cost him a hundred gold pieces. Handmade and reinforced with magic, as opposed to traditional heavy armor, any piece of clothes can be made to be as strong with only a spell. Though that method is costly and only a handful of people from the order can perform it. That’s where his connections with Thunderstain came in handy.

“Rose, thanks for all the help,” He replied while leaving the hideout. \*Brrrr,\* “Ma’am are you sure about giving him that thing?” Isac spoke. “It’s not an issue, that thing as you say is getting more popular by the day, he’ll have more use for it than us.”

## [Chapter 34](#)

Onwards to Krigi

“Five days have passed, the situation in the north has gotten pretty bad. Thanks to Rose and her informant’s gathering info throughout the kingdom my knowledge of the state of things is up to date. Not to mention this invention of mine, I built it on the nights when I couldn’t sleep. Based off an idea my dad told me once, ‘war would be easier won if we could communicate faster and efficiently.’ Using the same principle of the device I used back for the trial and some bits and pieces, I’ve made something that can transmit sound over quite a distance. The signal doesn’t die out because I’ve attached the vacuum spell manuscript onto it as well, so the message doesn’t die out halfway. Thanks to this, I’ve managed to get what I wanted. A car, at last, two seats in the front three at the back and a lot of space behind for four or more. Looks like a truck but smaller with the features of a car mixed in; it’s new and people call it the pick-up truck, sounds stupid but it’s worth it. Hey... UNDRAR, I haven’t been speaking to myself for all this time, have I?”

“Yawn, no, I’m listening.”

“Don’t yawn telepathically. Tell the girls to get ready, I’ll head to the bank and visit the guild, I’ve never been there before. With all this cash lying around, have to store it somewhere.”

“Alright, what about the pick-up truck thing and the voice stuff,”

“You didn’t pay attention; the voice stuff is like telepathy but for people without the magic, I’ll call it radio or something. Pick-up truck is our new means of travel, it looks expensive and menacing, perfect for my look.”

“You just want to show off, fine, I’ll get some supplies with Adelana.”

“See you later, gothic sis.”

“Die,”

.....

Having picked up a new means of travel, Staxius had to go around the forest as opposed to just crossing it. From the Thunderstain hideout till Dundee if you took the long route, it would take about three to four hours. However, with him driving, he stepped on the gas like there was no tomorrow. He reached town in less than two hours. Parked outside, given that the town hasn’t gotten any road for him to drive on, he walked into the northern district. First stop was the bank, the building wasn’t that far off from the town square. Everyone walking or strolling casually in that district wore expensive and dignified clothes. For once, with the bloodied suit gone, he looked like a noble, given that he was one thanks to the crest, and not by blood. The bank itself had three floors, made with stone, and reinforced with metal; guards secured the entrance as well as the bank itself. Thinking the guard might stop him, he put on the persona of a very rich noble. He walked slowly in an exalted way; the guards could not but just look away from his splendor. Internally, he laughed. Once inside, there wasn’t that much, two girls stood at a counter directly facing the door. Thankfully, this bank wasn’t ruled by the country but by the guild who was totally independent. “Welcome sir, how may I be of service?”

“Thank you for the courteous welcome, is this where I may leave my earnings?”

“Yes sir, we are the bank, where we can give as well as take money from you, of course we keep it safe and sound, placing gold coins or other valuables in our safe room will ensure that you can use that amount of gold where ever you are as long as a guild or bank is present in that area. Which means over the whole kingdom.”

“Lovely, how much is the limit if I dare ask?”

“Limit to how much you can take out or leave in?”

“Both,”

“First of all, if your choosing to take out a loan, then, we’ll have to take something with the same value as collateral. It’s standard procedure, this is a new system and people rather not like it. And for the deposit amount, that’s up to you. For now, we have policies for both nobles and commoners. You know how the kingdom is ruled, nobles are given priority, however, the guild leader despises that and said disparities are nullified.”

“What do the noble have to say about that?”

“Nothing, the guild is the second most powerful entity after the king, even the duke and SSS-ranked mages can’t lift a finger at how we rule our association.”

“Thanks for explaining all that, now then, I’d like to deposit some cash.”

“First of all, you’ll have to register both with the guild and the bank as well. We can start the procedures here, all we require is a sample of your blood.”

“Very well, but will this be required too?” Taking his crest out of the watch pocket, it was beautiful.

The dragon crest glowed in its full golden color as the purple lightning insignia added more power and increased the overall beauty.

For a second, the girl was out of breath, the crest took her by surprise. Her hands trembled slightly, invisible to the naked eye, but Staxius caught on. “Excuse my rudeness, I’m Boron Staxius Haggard, an A-rank mage.” He smiled.

\*Cough,\* “We’ll still require your blood for the registration with the guild.”

“Can I also sign up to be an adventurer as well?”

“I apologize for speaking out of line, but an adventurer my lord?”

“Do I have to repeat myself?”

“S-sorry...”

Minutes turned into hours; all the registrations were completed. “My lord, how much money will you be depositing?” \*Snap,\* Hidden by a basic concealment spell, the massive bag containing his wealth appeared. “I’d like to deposit ten-thousand gold.”

Hearing so much money, everyone present, nearly choked to death. “Are you sure my lord?”

“Yes, this is just change to me, please make it quick, I don’t have all day to entertain you.” Which was an obvious lie, “I hope the nobles here caught on.”

“Done, with that card we gave you sir, you can see your total amount of cash. There’s no risk of foul play, the magic we use is ancient, hence none has an idea about how it works.”

“Thank you very much,” He left. “Except I know how it works, you basically form a blood contract with your money and it’s assigned to a given number. Then by throwing it into the void or a separate dimension of ours, it can be accessed from where ever. I do wonder if I can somehow fake my identity and access other people’s stuff. All I need is a drop of their blood and some imagination; that’s a quest for another time.”

The guild card he was handed was of a silver and golden color which signified how rich he was. That ten-thousand gold immediately put him to the top of the pecking order. The front showed his name alongside how much money he had, and behind, his rank within the guild. Currently, it was C-rank. You can’t get high ranks just by being powerful, you need to help people and prove your worth. This card

was imbued with mind-reading magic which altered its rank depending on the user's accomplishment. Having caught on to that fact; Staxius used dark-arts to change his persona, and the rank increased. Instantly; he reached SSS-rank but chose to lower it. When magic is involved; no one can best his knowledge. A mystery stands over his head, the magic that the crest's uses, he was clueless.

With everything sorted, he went to the hotel. Everyone waited for him, "Welcome back master," Adelana spoke out. With the incident that happened days prior, Staxius still held a grudge for no apparent reason. "Thanks," He coldly replied. Ignoring the silver guardians; he headed straight for Eira, Fenrir, Undrar, and Millicent. "Hello everyone; it's great to see you Eira, did you mish me," She giggled.

No one caught on, but the silver guardians knew something was up. The night before; Adelana told everyone the truth and it was normal for them. In the eyes of Staxius, that was clearly a betrayal of his authority as master, pride hurt, he decided to ignore them. Or so what they thought.; actually, he was just playing around with their emotions. Another reason given to torment them; deep inside he was having fun.

"Gather your stuff and follow me." Eira in hand; he led them outside of town. The pick-up truck awaited. "Fenrir, Undrar, Eira and Millicent, in the front. The rest of you, get outside. The seats are basically the same, I've done some changes to it, you shouldn't feel cold as we move." The backside was usually opened to the elements, but back at the Thunderstain hideout; with the help of some mages. He added a roof and door, it was short and clean, painted in black and red, the vehicle was amazing. Despite that, the silver guardians felt left out as there was no way to communicate to the people sitting in front.

"Staxius, are you sure it's wise to ignore them like this?" Undrar asked telepathically.

"Of course it's not, but the look on their faces is priceless, I want to see them suffer a bit more. My pride was hurt on that day, I, Staxius Haggard am not a softy. I told them explicitly on the night I said I accepted the allegiance that I'll not use their bodies to get by. But my words fell on deaf ears didn't it. Now suffer, you brats. My blood boiled; I wanted to kill Adelana the instant that tear shed." He sighed.

"Let's head out," Injecting mana into the truck; the engine started up and their trip back to Dorchester began. The ride was smooth at times but rough as well.

"Adelana, I feel like we are going to get abandoned," Ancret spoke out.

"Y-yes, I-I feel that way too," Ayleth added.

"..." Annet nodded.

"You can't blame master for acting like he is. Adelana I'm sorry to say this but you hurt his pride.

I'm sure he was willing to let you do whatever; that uncertainty of doing something against your will is what truly made him this mad."

"Stop it, Alyson," Ancret spoke out infuriated.

"Or else what, the truth is bitter; He explicitly told us that he would not resort to selling our bodies for a quick buck. For the love of God, he made an alliance with Thunderstain just so that we could have some money; at night he stole, but you guys are too blind to see how hard he works to give us a hot meal every day. On top of that; just before we left for Dundee, he hurt himself badly. Bones shattered; his



mana was gone, have you forgotten that you were the one who healed him partially?" Ancret's useless revolt was shattered.

"Staxius Haggard is a great man, we are lucky to serve under him. Being a father at his age is hard, on top of that he has like eight mouths to feed. Lastly, he fights for us. Remember the whole incident with Fenrir, you've seen how dark his aura can be. He doesn't care about us, well he does; if we were just pawns, he would have not cared for us. OPEN YOUR EYES ADELANA, YOU SCREWED UP BADLY TRYING TO SHOULDER OUR BURDEN BY YOURSELF." For the first time in her entire life,

Alyson lost her cool and fought for someone.

"Calm down, we get it," Annet spoke.

"I'm s-sorry," Adelana was balling her eyes out.

"NO USE BEING SORRY NOW, HE'S GONNA ABANDONED US," Alyson screamed. The truck stopped instantly. "Would you guys please SHUT THE FUCK UP," Staxius got out and rushed into the outside compartment.

"I care not if you think badly about me; frankly, I am and I will abandon you guys after this trip. I can't have people betraying my words and not follow through with it." His aura began to seep out unconsciously; the frustration was finally coming out. It was so dark, filled with death and malice, everyone began to suffocate. Fearing the worst; Undrar with Eira in hand got out to check on him.

"You silver guardians piss me off SO MUCH, I hate it, I hate you. I can't, I just can't. Enough is enough, I'm done acting like a caring master, you want to see who I truly am, then get out this instant." Single file, they stepped out. He stood in front, "AHHHHHHHHHHH" \*BAM,\* An explosion echoed and rattled the ground around them. Staxius's true strength was unleashed; his aura was so thick and immense it looked like a wall of smoke; eyes turned bright red, the writing on his chest burned with flames so hot the ground began to heat up. The silver guardians were petrified by fear; death was staring them in the face. Knowing what fate awaited them; they bowed their heads.

"Papa..."

## [Chapter 35](#)

### Night before the storm

Eira spoke, she feared what his father had become. Tears rolled down her rosy cheeks; everyone stared at her. "Eira..." A tear of happiness shed from Staxius's bright red eyes; however, it evaporated thanks to the intense heat. The aura faded, he was back to normal and rushed to his daughter's side. Eira truly was his limiter, her first words calmed the raging beast who nearly awoke. Forgetting completely about the silver guardians and his prior game; he focused on Eira who began crying. "Don't cry, I'm here," He smiled, everyone felt his genuine kindness.

\*Haaah,\* After a big exhale, he spoke, "Adelana, Ayleth, Ancret, Alyson and Annet, I think I owe you an apology for lashing out," Head bowed, everyone could not but rush and hug him.

“I’m sorry as well,” Adelana spoke, everyone cried. “Hook, line and sinker.” Staxius’ attention changed from the heartwarming hug to Millicent wailing inside; she held up the radio. “This must be urgent,” He went inside while carefully pushing aside the girls who loved him as a caring master.

A week had passed since Parcyvell and the princess struck a deal. Hidden in the shadows, always scheming; away from the wittiest strategist. Princess Gallienne and Parcyvell worked together perfectly, their line of thinking was so alike you’d think they were twins.

“Greeting princess, I’m sorry to bug you this hour, I’ve but a question to ask.” Parcyvell used the blood of freshly picked villages from the surrounding; he cast the Bloody Mary spell – a spell which allows two people to converse freely at the expense of someone else’s lifeforce. The whole ritual involved tasks only a mad person would undertake; it involved hours of torture, infusing your own mana into the victim, calling upon a spirit. To surmise, it’s a spell not often used due to the prep work. Nevertheless, the ability to speak instantaneously with the other person makes it worth it.

“Greetings to you as well, Duke Parcyvell. To what do I owe this honor?”

“I gravely apologize if you were busy, sadly, the nobles here in Dorchester are oozing with anticipation for the fight against Kreston. Everyone has revenge set on their mind. If you delay any longer, our plan then may entail consequences we haven’t even envisioned.”

“You worry so much. Today is the day your dream comes to reality, my dear duke.”

.....

\*Crack,\* “YOU WORTHLESS SON OF A ...” Parcyvell screamed as soon as the Bloody Mary spell vanished. The mirror through which the communication was made possible, broke. It meant that the poor fellow supplying for life-force had sadly passed away. Frustrated, the Duke unleashed his anger onto the still warm lifeless body, rips, and cuts, and dismembered arms and legs as if uprooting flowers. He was covered with blood, “Gareth, please bring me a towel.” He shouted as if it would make any difference.

\*Creeek,\* The door through which laid the torture chamber sloppily opened; inside intricate and innovating but usually confusing devices were spotted. “In the name of God; how do you even stand this stench,” Gareth asked, using his left hand to cover his nose, and using the other to hand out the snow-white towel. “Now, now, this foul stench as you say is my most prized collection,” The dimly lit room finally brightened out. On the walls; body parts, bodies, mostly women were hung or nailed fixed. Some breathed while others reeked. Nonchalantly, wiping his face, he stood up from the bloodied mess he caused. “Gather the nobles, today is when we finally go to war, princess Gallienne just reassured me. Despite her young age, that girl is worse than the devil.” They left the room.

“Surely you jest, Parcyvell you’re as twisted as a man as she is,”

“I’ll gladly take that as a compliment – sadly, she’s more wicked than me. I’m both excited and afraid of what plan she concocted.”

“Guess we’ll find out later. Please take a bath in some poison; you reek of death and shit.”

“Now, that’s not very nice to address your lord in such an insolent manner.”

"You stupid..." Gareth tried grabbing him but lost grip thanks to his bloodied clothes. Swiftly, the duke escape acting like a little kid, he giggled and left. Leaving a trail of crimson footsteps behind him.

"May I come in," A soft and innocent voice spoke from the hall. "Gallienne, is that you, my child?"

Please enter, I've been waiting." She replied. The massive door opened; the sheer size would put a hut to shame. Inside, sat beautifully as if she were a goddess, Queen Sely. She was having her usual tea accompanied with some luxurious pastries. The room was very spacious, you could have a spar here and still have space remaining. This was the study; bookshelves reaching up to the very high ceiling, this was her private collection. From unique work of arts by famous authors to grimoires even a witch couldn't hope to get, she had it all. The queen was an avid reader and passionate of magic and anything related to that subject may it be: alchemy, necromancy, so on and so forth.

"What ails you?" Teacup put back onto the table, she straightened her posture.

"Mother, is Theodore here?"

"I'm afraid not, please check the garden dear, I've asked him to gather some mint for my tea." She replied as gracefully as she could; Sely truly was a queen. "Once again, I apologize for the inconvenience, I know full well that you hate getting interrupted at this hour."

"No need to worry," She smiled, and the door closed. "Ack, I hate her, she's so entitled I want to puke," Gallienne headed towards the garden. Her soft and quiet footsteps faded into the endless corridors, "What is that girl up to again," She sighed. "Always scheming, just like my brother – oh I wished you never had to meet him." She resumed her prior activities.

"Theodore Piper, I demand your presence at once," The princess spoke from within her room. Earlier thanks to her mother's words, she headed into the garden to find naught but bees and

butterflies. Like any butler employed by the royal family; the main requirement was their strength both as a mage and as well as a martial arts specialist. Butlers and maids were trained rigorously, they formed part of a branch in the royal military as combat servants who served both as bodyguards and retainers.

Faster than a blink of an eye, he appeared. "How may I be of service princess?" Previously Theodore was assigned to the queen, but after a fallout within the family, he was assigned to the princess instead. The queen was guarded by maids instead; the king was very possessive as well as gullible.

"How's the task I gave you coming along?"

"The subject is ready; you may speak to her this very instant if you desire."

"I'm tired, please bring her here instead." She spoke, still irritated from earlier.

"As you wish," He disappeared. Locked in the dungeon, a girl who bore bleach blonde hair; a sign of being pure and noble sat in the darkness. \*Ping, ping, ping,\* the slow and monotonous sound of a knife hitting the iron bars broke her day-dream. "Theodore, is that you?" She asked, voice as innocent as an angel. "Impressive for a blind girl, instantly sensing my aura and recognizing it on top of that is very impressive indeed." He flattered her.

“Am I finally free? I’ve done what you wanted – please let me go.”

“Don’t hurry yourself, you still have a crucial role to play tonight. Come, the princess has asked me to come to fetch you, be on your best behavior.” \*Clang,\* the lock opened. Out of courtesy, Theodore escorted her to the princess’ room. The walk was long and tiring, the vexing stairways didn’t bother the butler as much as it did to the young maiden. She was out of breath half-way across.

“Your highness, I’ve brought her.” Leaving her out in the open inside Gallienne’s room; he left. Blind, she only sensed the ominous aura surrounding the princess. The girl was blessed with divine eyes at the detriment of her normal sight hence bestowed with the blessing to see a person’s soul as well as premonitions.

“So, you’re the praised and revered proponent of Tharis the goddess of Judgement. I’ve heard far and wide about your exploits and miracles performed in Plaustan. Luckily, I’m the only one who knows the truth about you,” She approached, “That hair, so soft and pure,” Her grips tightened.

“Your highness, it hurts,” She spoke. Eyes changed from irritated to angry, “Astrid Gaubert, this may come as a surprise but I do intend on hurting you,” She pulled her hair horizontally backward, “PLEASE STOP,” Astrid screamed. A red aura began to emanate from her; her blessing from Tharis was acting up.

Scared, the princess let go. “I see you truly are the apostle of heathens. No matter, with you by my side, I’ll force Kreston to launch a holy crusade against your belief. As you see, the church in Kreston hates everyone and everything that goes beyond their teachings, for them only one god exists.”

“Theodore,” Gallienne called out.

“Yes, your highness,” he appeared out of nowhere once again.

“Please escort this fine maiden to Duke Parcyvell’s castle and hand him this note.” The letter bared a crimson seal which legitimized its origin. “Princes..” Before he could finish, she spoke – “Take my personal airship, I need her delivered as soon as possible. Now then, don’t waste time.”

“Thank you for your generosity,” He bowed his head and took Astrid by hand. “Princess Gallienne, heed my words, a man whom you tried to erase has arisen once more, he shall destroy the darkness which lurks in your pitiful heart. Goddess Tharis judges all and knows all.” She left while reciting a divine revelation.

“Such nonsense coming from a heathen’s mouth is naught but a futile attempt to falter my resolve, I wish death comes to thou fast, blinded fool – wow, I nearly spoke like dad, is this what it means to be related?” She wondered about her unusual change in speech.

Outside, inside the newly built garage, Theodore got the airship ready. Red and black in color, the vehicle was the finest piece of technology anyone had ever built. With the help of the order as well as scholars from various universities around the globe; of course, from kingdoms who swore allegiance to one another, it was built. A smaller and faster alteration of the big airships people used.

“Excuse me Theodore, but where am I headed now?”

“At the moment; its Dorchester, please let me help you.” He pulled her into the cockpit.

Mana injected; the machine started up. It wasn't that long when the airship reached its maximum velocity and swooshed through the air like a comet.

Still on the radio, Staxius saw Undrar pointing up as she heard a strange sound coming from above. Confused, the moment he looked up, a red bullet flew by. Indifferent, he continued.

"Astrid, we've arrived." The airship landed near castle Grasley's front gates. "Excuse me for being so late," Theodore handed over both the girl and the note, then left without looking back. "Good luck Astrid, that man is a fiend." Those were his parting words before she got off. Seeing the letter and the girl; Parcyvell chose to admire the lady instead. Dressed in white from head to toe, her face was as flawless as a diamond. Skin in the color of sand, she stood, blindfolded. In the middle of her breast, the holy insignia of Goddess Tharis; a balance.

"Gareth, please show this lovely maiden the way inside." Impatient, he broke open the seal barehanded.

"Dear Duke Sten Parcyvell,

I've sent this note to inform you about our next plan of action. As you see, I took much of the needed time to hunt this fellow lady, the details of that quest are bland and mundane. All you need to know is that she's an apostle from another god, which means that Kreston wants her dead.

Now, I've already sent spies to propagate rumors about her being in your castle, throughout Kreston. This will force them to truly lead a holy crusade against Dorchester. I know full well that you've kidnapped Duke Hawkin's daughter. I don't expect her to be alive by this point. Don't harm the apostle just yet, she's important; keep your inner demon in check or else you will be my next toy. With this, I've fulfilled my promise, and don't worry about the king; as far as he's concerned, you're a saint."

"Princess Gallienne, you truly are the best," He returned inside, jolly.

"Please be careful..." Rose ended the call, a look of contempt filled Staxius's eyes.

## [Chapter 36](#)

### Doubt

"Brother? Why do you have such an expression on your face, is everything good?" Viola spoke, concerned.

"EVERYONE, in the truck this instant, we are leaving for Krigi, I'll drive throughout the night, we need to get there as fast as possible."

"But why are we in such a hurry?" Adelana asked, confused. "I thought you were happy about Eira saying her first words..." Annet added. "Mhmm..." They all unanimously agreed.

"I'll explain further, just get in." Mana injected; the car purred. The more mana it had to consume, the faster it drove, said mana wasn't an issue. With a big inhale, he gave away half of the mana he stored. The car started off innocent, but the blackened and dense fuel made the engine roar.

"Quick, quick," He got impatient. Seeing how he behaved, everyone got anxious.

As night slowly seeped in, Staxius crossed Savaview bridge. The same old excuse worked, castle Garsley looked normal for a pair of neutral eyes, however, brewing inside; a plot that was going to turn this entire region upside down.

Sat inside the dining hall, Sten had dinner in the company of the young apostle. His mood was jovial, it was the first time he had fun apart from the torture and grim fetishes. A virtuous and innocent bit of fun, he held a comforting smile throughout the night. By his order, messages were sent throughout the noble district and addressed everyone who formed part of the council.

“Oh Astrid – the apostle of goddess Tharis, I wish to offer up my gratitude by serving you this exquisite dinner. Please, don’t bring shame upon the people who starved so you can have a filled stomach. If you don’t wish to eat, I shall be forced to reprimand the people who cooked such a feast.

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You may say I’m cruel, however, this is the fate of anyone who doesn’t stand up to my standards; you not eating proves that my cooks weren’t up to the task of arousing your sense of smell and appetite.” He spoke mysteriously, he threatened the innocent, thus forcing her hand.

“Duke Sten Parcyvell, your reputation behooves you; I see that the rumors about you being a vile individual is accounted for by that stench you call your aura. I must say though, this meal truly is succulent, it was made with love and passion, I can feel all the sadness through each bite.”

“You insolent little bitc...” Gareth tried shouting but Sten calmed him. “Why are you hesitant commander Gareth, weren’t you going to put me to the sword?” She spoke, after finishing her meal elegantly. She ate as if her eyesight was normal; though she was blind.

“My, my, Astrid you are also sly, I command your boldness. You tried provoking my servants into striking; thus, verifying if I was going to protect or let them kill you. I ask you this, what would have happened if, by misfortune, one of my men would put you down?”

After wiping her rosy lips using the handkerchief she carried, “Thank you for the meal, and for your question, I’ve but to say this. Try and you shall find out.” She smiled. “If we’re done, can one of you kind gentlemen please escort me to my cell or room, I need rest, me being here will trigger a holy crusade, best be ready, Parcyvell.”

“As you wish, Gareth if you’d be so kind,” Sten nodded as if saying sorry. “Very well,” the commander gave up.

“Duke, let me give you a word of advice. The heir has arisen; protected by his five guardians and two demi-gods, he comes. Try as hard as you may, he will only bring chaos and suffering. Beware, this country is soon to change, none can predict how the thread of destiny for this man will intertwine on this tapestry called our fate, farewell.”

“Heir of what?” Sten asked sarcastically, “The rambling of a fool, what a waste of breath. The country is soon to change, cause I, Sten Parcyvell, will soon overthrow Kreston and rule as if I were king.”

Hidros is on the brink of war; back in the capital, the princess schemed yet again. “Theodore,” She shouted, still not budge since earlier.

“At your service your highness.”

“Please, take this to the orphanage, tell the elder that I want a full report on their research,”

Carrying a bag of gold; Theodore left. “Sten Parcyvell, you are so gullible it’s unbelievable. I, Gallienne Riverty, never give anyone an advantage over me. You think you can win a war against Kreston on your own, armed with only a few nobles who secretly serve under me? What a joke. This kingdom shall be ruled as it was intended to from the start; by the royal family and not some incompetent council of nobles.” She laughed, held an old looking notebook that seemed to appear out of nowhere.

‘Research on artificial elements. Author, Tempest Haggard.’

“Thank you so much for leaving me with such a treasure, my dear uncle-in-law.” She opened the notebook once again, the pages were frail, one false move and it could all crumble away. Resting on the table under a concealment spell, the same notebook but newer.

Night fully engulfed the surroundings, visibility was awful as the fog began to emerge from seemingly nowhere. Having no choice in the matter, about ten kilometers away from the castle, beside a massive bolder situated in the middle of nowhere; Staxius set up camp. A quick glance at the pocket watch indicated nine o’clock, Krigi was still a way off. The trail leading there wasn’t that pleasant to ride on, hence his decision to wait out the night. Despite saying he would explain everything, so focused on driving, he forgot.

The subtle sound of wood burning put everyone at ease. The stars weren’t that visible thanks to the fog. Instead, all the attention switch to the burning flame. Millicent slowly got along with everyone; she could finally hold a conversation. The silver guardians laughed and played around with Eira, the babe knew only one word; papa. Everyone was trying to make her say their name but to no avail. Sat opposite them; Staxius stared eagerly.

“Why don’t you join them?” Undrar finished answering nature’s call. “I see you feel relieved.” Staxius jokingly added. She blushed with embarrassment, “Shut it.”

“Undrar, thank you.” The sincerity within his broken tone was palpable. He looked as if he were about to break down and cry, he felt awful. “W-where is this coming f-from.” She spoke, confused.

Nearly broken, slapping his cheeks a few times until it got bright red, he spoke again, “Can’t I be grateful to someone I truly appreciate? I just wanted to thank you for everything you’ve done for me. From protecting me, taking care of Eira and keeping tabs on the silver guardians; honestly, without you – I’d be lost. Not to mention you got Millicent to open her heart, I’m grateful to have someone like you as my partner.” Flustered, Undrar was left speechless. Without any warning,

Staxius embraced her tightly. “W-what are y-you doing?” She tried speaking but Staxius’s hug was more than she could handle in terms of physical strength, she choked.

“I’ve made up my mind, thanks Undrar.” He let go and stared at the fire.

\*Cough, cough,\* Able to breathe yet again, she asked, “Made your mind about what?”

“About what to do next, the silver guardians are important to me even though I act cold and sometimes like an asshole to them. I can’t help it, I don’t want to get too attached, one day, this party of ours will

end.” He facepalmed while whining about how emotions were worthless. “Stop it,” Undrar spoke seriously. – “Why?”

“You constantly say that emotions are a pain, however, don’t you see how much they’ve helped you. That will to protect someone, the anger when someone goes against you, the pain after losing a battle, it makes you human and ultimately makes you stronger as well.”

“You’re right, but I still think it’s a pain.” He smirked. – “I’ve had this dream ever since we came back to my world. I see Krigi in flame, the people I care about dying and lastly a hydra, a beast so powerful even I can’t hope to defeat. If I was the Staxius who was emotionless, I’d have no problem shrugging this feeling off, however, when I see those smiles on everyone’s faces and think about how it could all end in an instant, I begin to doubt myself. – Am I truly fit for protecting so many awesome people? Aren’t I just a killing machine? Do I deserve this joy after slaughtering others? Damn it, my ideals...”

After a short break, “I’ve decided to leave them behind, my journey is filled with despair and suffering. I don’t want them to end up like me. They deserve better, we are headed to Krigi on a mere dream. No one knows if the hydra will be there, I just want to visit my hometown before everything goes to the point of no return.”

“MASTER,” Fenrir shouted. Attention caught; he stopped complaining, “Eira is calling for his papa,” Ancret added with a smile as big and warm as the sun. “Coming,” He shouted back.

“Undrar, you’ve heard what I had to say,” Handing out his hand as if asking for a dance, “Will you still accompany me, little sis?” He smiled. No answer required, she took his hand without any doubt and rejoined with the group.

“Pa...pa,” She spoke yet again, “Aw that’s it, I’m papa,” He smiled and made funny faces while babbling. “Is it just me, or master looks handsome when he tries being all cute with Eira,” Ancret asked. “I might fall for you,” She whispered into his ears as he sat beside her. “And I might fall into hell if I dared lay a hand on you,” He denied her once more. “Rejected yet again,” She pouted. “Master, is everything alright?” Alyson spoke out at last. – “Why do you ask so?”

“I saw you nearly break down into tears, honestly, I nearly cried.” She replied.

“Master nearly cried?” Everyone got up and rushed to aid him. “Settle down all of you, I just had dust in my eyes that’s all.” He brushed them off. – “I guess Undrar’s back was itchy then.” Adelana finally spoke. “OH – someone got caught,” Annet called him out.

“Enough,” He sighed. “M-master... what w-was that p-power e-earlier.” The shy Ayleth asked the question on everyone’s mind. – “Yeah, who are you, truly?” Adelana pressed on.

“Do you want to know who I am? After hearing it, there may be no going back; I might slay you for I do not want my identity to be compromised. With all of this do you still wish to continue?” He toggled on dark-arts, trying to change their resolve in wanting to know more. \*Gulp,\* “YES.” They all shouted.

“...” Speechless, he just stared at them, unwilling to talk. Instantly, he glanced over at Undrar who hid her presence. “Damn you.”

“Fine, – first, let’s start with the first question about why we were in a hurry earlier.” After half an hour of explaining what Rose’s informants had gathered, he concluded with, “Dorchester and Kreston are



going to war soon. My plan was to overthrow the council ruling here, but I guess the holy army is going to do that for me.”

“But why go to such lengths?” Alyson enquired. – “Maybe Millicent here can shed some light on our situation, she’s one of the factors which helped Dorchester to get a reason for waging war.” Surprised, everyone stared at her, waiting for an answer.

“P-please, d-don’t b-blame this on me...” She nearly cried. – “No need to worry, I’ll explain on your behalf.” Staxius reassured her, after another ten minutes, he concluded yet again with, “That’s why she was taken prisoner by what I’m guessing were hired mercenaries to act as the holy army. – isn’t that right?” Millicent nodded.

“Master, don’t you think we can stop this senseless slaughter?” Annet spoke out – “People are going to die for no apparent reason.” She concluded.

“Don’t be so foolish, people here have it way worse than death, so far I’ve taken you through a route which doesn’t have any bloodshed or how it shows how Dorchester is truly run.”

“L-lord Staxius is right, D-Dorchester is h-hell.” Millicent approved. “Master, why should we believe in Millicent?” The ever-doubtful Alyson spoke.

“Now that’s a worthy question, – why indeed. It’s simple, this lady here you thought were an object of lust is naught but Duchess Millicent Parcyvell. She’s wedded to the ruling duke. – to back my accusations; here: letters, photographs of her prior splendor and her wedding ring, engraved underneath is her signature as well as her family crest. She may not look in now for how she must have been treated, but lady Millicent here was once the fairest lady throughout the kingdom. She was sought out by many, ultimately, fell for Sten and the rest is history.”

\*Cough,\* “H-how d-did you...” She was baffled. – “Are you going to use me as my husband did?” Her tone changed from scared and fragile to stern and frightening.

“Just like I thought, you were playing the role of a lady in distress from the start. You never were truly mentally scarred; I’m guessing you played along just so we would forget you. – One thing baffles me though, why did you choose to act that way?”

“Impressive, so I’ve been found out...”

## [Chapter 37](#)

### War Approaches

“It’s simple, at first all I wanted was power, all those people courting me; the false compliments, the backbiting from other ladies. I wanted it all to disappear and marrying into a duke’s family seemed easiest to reach that goal. Somehow along the way, I fell in love with him, my lust for power vanished. He showed me a side of him that no one else in the kingdom knew about; the caring and loving side. I thought I struck gold; I wanted to be a good wife.

One day after we were wedded, his true nature was revealed to me. He abused, tortured, and played with me as if I were a toy. All the sleepless nights, he would sexually assault me for hours on end. I didn’t want him to feel any pleasure in my suffering, so I remained silent. Luckily, being raised in a harsh

environment; I adapted and survived. Though as time went on, I broke, both physically and mentally; my mind completely shut down.

Then on the day, I was sent into the forest as per his plot to instigate war. I was so frightened about being abused by men other than him; I tried reaching out but it fell on deaf ears. You see, I still harbor affection for that wicked man I call or used to, husband. Tied to a tree, I thought it was going to end for me, then your girl's swooped in to save me. I thought it was my chance to start over. Even though I still liked him, I wanted to just run away, I still do, but I guess I'm going to be used as a political tool now aren't I. A woman like me doesn't have the right to be happy, I guess it was just fate. "

"Millicent, you say you wanted power, is that still your dream or do you wish to get together with your husband again? I need an answer from you, it's purely coincidental, no strings attached; show me your truest feelings." Hearing her story, everyone got on edge; they felt pity for her, however, Staxius kept a stern expression. Trusting other people was something he did rarely.

"My truest feelings, I think; on the day I saw you fighting Fenrir there, my heart kind of started beating again. You fighting her was something breathtaking, it was like my life being played repeatedly; faced against a big obstacle, through the pain from each strike you took, that will to survive and fight kept you alive. I wanted to be like that; I don't wish to run away anymore but I'm powerless, I was thrown as if I was disposable. In the end, I'm just an aging whor..."

"Nonsense, you say you want to live but have alienated yourself from any hope – how can you find the will to surmount the hill in front of you if you're not going to take the first step. Your reasoning is like a child trying to break a mountain with only a pebble, its useless." He replied harshly. The words coming out of his mouth were stinging her deeply, he spoke the truth.

"How... in just one conversation, you knew about who I truly am. Here I was thinking I had layered my cowardice with lies. Guess you are out of my leagu..." Tears flowed, she sobbed.

Everyone except Staxius rushed to her side to comfort her.

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"Undrar, what's your take on this?" He asked telepathically.

"She seems sincere. I'll admit the first time we took her in, something was off. I felt an aura of deception; you felt it too. "

"Yes, I knew she lied but for whatever reason, I wanted to try and help her. But later, when I found out about her identity; she may prove useful in the end."

"Are you going to use her as bargaining chips against Sten?"

"Even better, she said she wanted power, I'll give her power. All I want is someone who can be trusted, I'm obsessed with making allies. Also, I think that this move may give me the chance to give the silver guardians and I some space apart."

Her cries got quieter; \*Cough, cough.\* "Excuse me, ladies, I have an announcement." He spoke after clearing his throat. Confused, they all gaze at Staxius who stood up. The moon reappeared behind him, the clouds began to scatter, he looked majestic. "Ex-duchess Millicent Parcyvell, do you wish power? Do

you have the desire to start over again? Do you wish for a new life? If so,” – He bowed and put forward his right hand, “Will you trust me?” For a second, everyone thought it was a marriage proposal. A sigh of relief was heard, Staxius chose to ignore it. With tears still in her eyes, “Gladly,” She took his hand while smiling for the first time ever.

Real identity discovered; Millicent spent the night recounting tales from childhood. Some were joyous while others were woeful. Meanwhile, tired, Staxius slept.

In a blink of an eye, the sun rose. Another day had passed, “Everyone, get in, we are headed to Krigi,” The engine purred, and they were off after breakfast.

“Sire, excuse my insolence, but we’ve gotten countless rumors about a fake apostle hiding out in Krigi.” A servant spoke while knelt to the ground. In front of him stood a giant statue of a god whose name was unknown to even the pope. During his morning prayer, he stopped and slowly glanced backward. “My child, haven’t I said that I wish to not be disturbed while I’m speaking the gods.” His tone was deep and soothing.

“I-I a-apologize, it was duke Hawkin who insisted to relay this message to you.”

“Ahh – is that so, very well; please relay this to him that I shall head over to his mansion in a few moments.” Silently, the servant left. “The time has come, my God; I shall purge Dorchester and rid the world of that filthy pseudo apostle.” He sighed.

Dressed in a white and golden robe, the father left for the duke’s mansion. The latter stood; the style was the same as Sophie’s house. Same architecture but different corridors, with the exception that the layout isn’t that confusing. “Father, this way please.” Someone who appeared to be a maid stood near the front gate. “Lead the way,” He smiled. His aura shined as brightly as the sun; white and noble. Deep inside the immense mansion, he waited inside the command room; the place where decision concerning bloodshed and war were made.

“I apologize for making wait this late,” A middle-aged man walked inside. Wearing a monocle paired with long mustaches – alongside a stern expression as if wanting to annihilate the whole country, he spoke courteously. “No apologies needed my dear duke.” The Father replied. Duke Hawkin was someone renowned for his vengeful nature, most of the nobles in Hidros don’t like how he does things. Though he appears normal and innocent on the outside; he’s a fiend. Even the righteous pope was someone to be feared. Together those two ruled Kreston; a country devoid of free will, the people are brainwashed by the sweet word of god.

“What is the matter, why have you called me so urgently today?” The pope asked, confused.

“Oh – father, this is awful; completely awful. My precious daughter has been slain by the man who harbors the fake apostle at his castle. The man Sten Parcyvell, he wishes for a war every year. I plea to you, help me conquer his state in the name of a holy war. Abducting and killing my daughter was the last drop of water that flooded my poor heart, I’m oozing with hatred and anger. Please, father, my daughter was good to you in more ways than one – please, avenge her.” He got onto his knees and begged. Hawkin was in pain, losing a loved one, and his daughter for a matter of fact.

“Duke Hawkin, please, raise your head. May I ask where you got your information?”

“The Thunderstain,”

“The information brokers?”

“Yes, they’ve confirmed that Dorchester might launch an attack against us.”

“But under what pretext? The king isn’t going to abide by that sort of behavior.”

“I agree, but father, it’s too late. The conniving princess has put Dorchester as a hero and us as the villains. She herself has said that our God isn’t to be trusted; and that the people of Kreston are but fools. She has blasphemed our lord’s name.”

“Very well,” He sighed. The cool-headed personality was replaced by his true persona. “Do they DARE, speak badly about my god. This will not go UNPUNISHED. Gather your troupes,” – He ripped off the robe, revealing a crimson red armor bearing the crest of the holy army. “We are marching to Dorchester; I hope you’ve done the necessary arrangements.”

“But of course,” This was common for both men, the moment Hawkin’s daughter was abducted; Kreston and the holy army were getting ready for war. And now that the pseudo apostle was found out, even the pope had a reason to fight. They always do a council like that for the theatrics, but both of them knew deep inside that war is the only way to get something you want. Also, for the other nobles in the council ruling Kreston, well they all live peacefully near the beach. Their armies are directly controlled by Hawkin.

Three hours went by, the war was soon approaching. Kreston were requesting mages from Claireville academy and so was Dorchester.

“Sophie, I guess you’re headed out today?” Josiah spoke from within the teacher’s rest area. – “Yes uncle, today is the day all mages contracted to fight are headed out.”

“But are you sure for fighting with Kreston? Aren’t they a bit... insane?”

“Yes, they are, but I was given express orders from my husband; hence my decision.”

“But why would he do something like that?” He inquired.

“Apparently, our family are close friends with duke Hawkin.” She smiled.

“But what about your child...”

“Oh...” – she patted her belly, “Not to worry, I’m an S-rank mage after all.” She smiled and left, a tear slipped and fell onto the floor while she opened the door.

Simultaneously, at the entrance, “Brother, are you sure you don’t want me to come along with you?” Autumn spoke out concerned. “No need to worry dear sister, I may be a C-rank mage, but I’m also a Duke. It’s my duty to fight when the time calls for it. Sten Parcyvell has helped me a numerous time before, I’m only but repaying the favor.”

“Very well, good luck then, brother,” She smiled. Split into two groups, more people than expected awaited the airships. On one side, the mages fighting for Kreston and the other Dorchester. Amidst the group, familiar faces were spotted, classmates and enemies.

“Listen up everyone, today you are no longer friends, you’ve been contracted to a province. I expect no pity for if you betray your agreement with the said country, then the order will reprimand you. I wish you luck in your future battles, for some of you, this may be the chance to gain glory as well as money. Now then, long live mages.” Josiah spoke.

Two airships controlled by the Order arrived. Ladders were thrown down, one by one, it filled up and left. War was here, in the coming days, this kingdom was going to change, but no one predicted how it was to unfold.

It was now noon; the ships just took off and were headed to their individual destination. Armies were gathered around each castle and mansion; the sheer number of soldiers was unbelievable. From the first look, both armies looked equally balanced in terms of manpower. More than ten thousand men were called in, may they be mercenaries or just robbers and thieves; even adventurers joined the fray.

Oblivious to what was brewing behind them, Staxius rode forward. He knew a war was coming but the true extent was discovered when, “Staxius, I’ve just received that both sides have hired mages to fight. This is no longer a petty fight but a full-on assault. One side is fighting for justice while the other in the name of God, you better get out of Dorchester if you want to survive. From what I gathered; an S-rank mage has been spotted by Kreston; she bears a rose for an emblem.” The transmission ended.

A small village came into view, “Sophie...” Staxius whispered.

## [Chapter 38](#)

Krigi

From green pastures of land with the occasional stray tree and flowerbeds; a small yet distinguishable town came into view – or what remained of it. The dirt path which had led the party into the area ended. And it began, from where the path ends, the true nature of Dorchester was revealed. The land is dry and hot, burnt trees, broken down buildings, the place was a wreck. They were in fact, inside Krigi, the Krigi of old. That village was once a thriving town under the rule of a compassionate nobleman. Blocked by wreckage and debris, Staxius asked Undrar to hide their iron steed with a concealment spell; a divine level one. Parked inside what appeared to be an old – two-story tavern, they got off.

“Lord all mighty, this place is a wreck,” Adelana spoke out in awe. Still gathering the necessities, Staxius chose to remain silent and secretly sneaked more stuff into his bag, the same bag he stole off the first noble he killed – the memories, a head rolling down a beach, good times. Thinking about it, he reflected onto his journey up to this point, meanwhile, the silver guardians accompanied by Fenrir and Millicent explored the remains of the once-prosperous town. Like a good companion as well as a member of his now rather expansive family which included the Thunderstain; Undrar chose to stay by his side along with the babe, the snow angel.

The murmurs of ideal chatter and bafflement got quieter; he could finally hear himself breathe. Letting a big sigh of relief, he spoke, “Finally, we made it, Krigi.”

“What do you mean we made it? This isn’t a village or a town, it’s a battleground.”

“I know that, but this is the Krigi of old, the place where I was born in. A part of my childhood was spent here, strolling, running, and getting into trouble in these alleyways and roads. You can’t fathom how

lively this place was; it felt like heaven. The people were so understanding and compassionate, always eager to give a helping hand.” – \*Snap,\* The vehicle was now hidden, Staxius continued his walk as Eira rested peacefully in his arms. “There, I’ve hidden the iron steed with the mightiest concealment spell I have, now please do continue. I rather enjoy listening when you speak so dearly about something you still cherish.”

“...” He remained silent for a bit, clearing the fog which clouded his thoughts. “My dear Staxius, that silence of yours speaks volumes.” She spoke as if adding salt to injury.

Shaking his head in disagreement, he continued,

“As I was saying, this town of mine was once a haven for both commoners as well as nobles. Even travelers were welcomed with open arms. It is also here that I learned the basics of magic and spell casting in general. Naturally, without any normal magical element, my dreams as a sorcerer were shattered. Even as a kid, I was mature. With that path now closed, I chose to read the books my dad had laying around his laboratory. Honestly, I understood nothing. The pictures of pentagrams were beautiful so I kept shifting through numerous pages. One day I came upon a strange device that broadcasted both video and sound at the same time; nowadays it’s common, but for a young child, that stuff was mind-blowing. Especially as none had access to that sort of technology. Long story short, I saw my dad fighting as a mage in the Claireville Academy tournament; I wanted to participate and become like him – sadly I still do. Then the war came, it changed everything, my dad went off fighting, my mother abandoned us, my memory is rather blurry about the details. I kept with my dad; the town was devastated. He greatly helped in the evacuation, the street on which we are walking this very moment is where he made his last stand. He fought off a platoon of fifty soldiers by himself before vanishing with me at his side. That’s basically it, I never knew what happened to the caring noble, my visit here isn’t of pure nostalgia.”

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“Must have been a pleasant place to stay at if you praise it so much.” Their walk ended when the whole crew halted as if seeing a ghost. Facing the north-west, another village came into view, far yet close enough to make out its shape and size. Surrounding it was nothing, the landscape was even worse than here, nothing for miles. The place looked like a desert, a few kilometers in the south-west of the said village, rose massive forests and greenery as well as a pretty long mountain range; separating both Dorchester and the neighboring province of Arda. A place pretty much secluded and living by their own means, access there is so restricted due to the rumored demi-humans and otherworldly entities. But these are just rumors, seeing as the Claireville Academy there hasn’t reported anything to the king or the Order. North-east of the village, a battlefield, followed by what was presumably the sea.

“Welcome to my hometown girls,” He spoke out.

“Excuse me master, but why have we come here? Is it the search for a long-lost love?” Ancret smirked. – “I can’t tell them that we are here purely because I saw this village being burnt within a dream – oh I know.”

“We’ve come here to set up camp; you know war is looming upon us. Seeing as my dad once made our home here, I thought, why not a visit home to show you, girls, how war can affect a region.” – That was the worst excuse anyone could have made but they ignored it, in their mind, he had a plan, the evil genius.

“What are we waiting around for, let’s go.” Alyson, who usually was secretive and preferred not talking became more friendly. “Onwards,” Annet added. “L-let g-go,” Ayleth quietly mumbled.

“Please master, lead the way,” Adelana spoke at last.

Fenrir and Millicent chose to remain silent and conversed among themselves. The latter was having doubts about the fate which laid within Staxius’s hand while the former was desperately trying to convince her that her master was a good person.

“Undrar, how do you even deal with all these people,” He voiced his frustration telepathically, having so many personalities around him took a toll onto his psyche. The diversity in the way they acted, how they felt and the risk of betrayal was on his mind constantly, if only he could trust them.

“Stop complaining, you’re the next death reaper, deal with it. You want allies but choose not to trust them, that’s your fault.”

“Oh – is someone on their... wait do demi-gods even go through that?” He chuckled then began laughing.

“DON’T YOU START,” she spoke out loud, her face glowed bright red. – “Fine, I’ll stop walking over your shoe,” He covered for her as everyone stared.

As time went by, the party etched closer to the Krigi of new. Staxius in the front with Eira in arms with Fenrir and Undrar standing on each side with the silver guardians and Millicent in the middle, the group finally arrived. Staxius was baffled, the place was in worse condition than when he left.

From house made of wood and covered with a roof made of leaves and sticks, to huts and a practically empty well as evidenced by the lack of footprints. The people were either working the still dried up farms located on the western side of the village or watching over the children who looked like living skeletons. Thanks to his eyesight, Staxius managed to spot everything before everyone.

The crew was still a way off for normal eyesight to pick up on how the village looked. The populous was decreased as well, only a few elders and poor commoners remained. No sign of adolescents anywhere. From the town in Oxshield where stone buildings were a common treat to this place where having a wooden wall was considered a luxury; he could naught but bite his lips.

Normally, wooden cabins were the common form of habitation for even a poor commoner, but this village, it was far worse than that.

After years and years of being apart from the place in which he was given birth, Staxius was here; a place he once called home. “I hope they remember me,” Taking a deep breath in, he entered their peripheral vision. At this time of day, mainly the elderly were in the village as well as the kids who ran around aimlessly, playing cat and mouse despite their frail-looking bodies. The band of kids playing stopped and stared up in wonder at this man who was dressed handsomely. The girls in his company were as beautiful as the blossoming of new flowers. Sat near the door of the first house, which was one of six wooden houses guarding the entrance of the village; a group of old folks wearing shabby clothes who looks sickly but cheerful at the same time stopped their reminiscing of old times.

“E-excuse m-me, b-but who a-are you,” One of the elders spoke out, at first glanced he looked about seventy and was dressed in black with a crest hanging from his neck. The man looked like someone noble and virtuous, a man of religion. One thing separated him from the other elder who dressed the same way apart from the color, it was the cut on his ear; the right ear was sliced off.

“F-father Ashford,” Staxius spoke out, a man from his past, still alive and well.

“W-who a-are you s-son?” Confused, he replied with hands shaking as he put on glasses which hung side by side the crest. “By God, t-this i-isn’t r-real,” The glasses landed on his small and freckled nose. Ignoring his companion, Staxius rushed to the old man’s side.

“S-Staxius...” He whispered. “Yes father, it’s me, I’ve come back,” Staxius replied with a warm smile as he knelt. “Oh – how much you’ve grown,” The elder began to caress his cheeks as if seeing if Staxius were truly present. One by one, the other elder’s present began recognizing the old trouble maker who made his appearance once again. They all spoke to him cheerfully; the village seemed to have regained something it had lost.

“S-Staxius, I’m so glad y-you’re here – if I may ask, who is this young infant you hold so close to your heart,” Father Ashford asked as he saw Eira sleeping peacefully.

“This is Eira, father – Eira Haggard, my daughter.”

“SPLENDID,” A small burst of joy followed by violent coughs. Everyone told him to not be so overly active, father Ashford was very frail and had one foot already in the grave.

“Ancret,” Staxius called,

“What is it?” She asked monotonously.

“Can you please cast a healing spell on these fine gentleman as well as these pair of lovely maidens.” Obviously, the people who sat around him were old, but Staxius was happy for once, some of the people who watched him grow were here, practically family.

“As you wish, master,” She smiled, happy for him. Everyone else in his party just admired how jolly he was, those strangers meant a lot for their master. \*Full body recovery,\* the incantation was short and silent, a surge of green aura engulfed the elderly.

“W-what is t-this t-trickery,” Father Ashford spoke out.

“I feel... ALIVE, Staxius what did you just do?” Everyone else began whispering amongst themselves. Out of joy, he stood up and hugged Staxius who crossed his legs and sat. Both the father and Staxius looked pretty close; one could say they were grandfather and grandson.

“Now the question at hand, Staxius...” His tone got serious – “Who are those lovely ladies who kept calling you master?” He stared eager and doubtful.

“Oh – they are my...” Everyone got tense, this moment was what they waited for; who they were to Staxius, the man they called master. “... Family,” Staxius smiled.



The silver guardians expected an answer like, 'They are my travel companions/bodyguards or plain servants,' but he chose to use the word family – a word he held at the utmost respect. Heart relieved of this burden called doubt; everyone introduced themselves.

In the distance, coming from the fields; people approached. The children went to call on their parents seeing as from their point of view, Staxius's presence meant trouble. He was dressed far better than anyone else, and in their childish mind, it meant that he was a ruthless nobleman who frequently abused the villages.

Everyone rushed as fast as possible, from father to mother to brother to sister, everyone worked tirelessly in hopes of getting some food. Surviving was their top priority; said priority was naught but lie. One by one, they got closer to the village; Staxius sensed them approaching a mile away but chose to remain silent as it would take them about five minutes to make it here.

"Who dares disturb me in my moment of rest and lust," A young man shouted out from the house directly in front of Staxius. He was dressed extravagantly for the exception of his pants which were all the way down. "Listen up you commoners, I've paid to sleep here, why not shut the hell up," His tone got more violent. "Sire, please, don't mind my father," A quiet whisper came from the inside; a familiar voice. Intrigued, Staxius stood up. "Please, son, don't go closer to that vile cabin," Father Ashford held his suit jacket.

"Shut up whore, I didn't ask for your opinion, you filth." He spat, "I'm leaving," Lifting up his trousers, he threw a bunch of copper coins on the ground and left.

"Father Ashford, where is Jessica?" Staxius asked doubtfully. Ashamed, the father's gaze turned to the ground. With a quick pull, infuriated by the father's response, Staxius rushed into the cabin; protected from the outside with only a piece of clothing as its door.

Eyes turned from joyful to disgusted and eventually to pity, he stared, "My god..."

## [Chapter 39](#)

### Reunion

Beaten with blood dripping from her face and all over; a girl laid on the bed. Her gaze faced downwards as she rested her head against a bundle of clothes. Staxius peaking went unnoticed. Her hair was oily and sticky, her clothes were torn and ripped. She was covered partially; her lower half was exposed. Eyes closed, she bore similarities to father Ashford outside; in the sense that she had – freckled nose. Her breathing was half asked, a feeling of dread and wanting to die oozed from her.

"Adelana," He yelled. Caught off guard, she mumbled a faint, "y-yes".

"Please follow that man who just left, I don't care who does it." He ordered as he entered the vile cabin. Shocked, everyone tried entering alongside, but a quick glance and a small gesture warned them to not do so. No choice in the matter, Alyson volunteered to follow her master's order. Hence, she disappeared, a faint mist of black smoke was left behind. Clueless, Adelana carefully examined the area until, "Girls, please come this way." One of the elder ladies painfully got up and led them inside the first wooden house – there out of curiosity; Undrar asked about how Staxius was as a kid.

Said question put a glimmer back inside the lifeless eyes the granny had, a feeling of happiness soon arose. The lady who seemed frail at first became livelier – she finally had someone whom she could recount tales from her past. As luck would have it, Staxius’s upbringing played a big part in her life as well as the village.

Outside, the remainder of villagers arrived; they looked tired and hungry. Father Ashford, peacefully told the worried parents and workers about who had come and that the young kids were mistaken.

With a sigh of relief, they all headed back to the farms. Their pace slowed down considerably, it felt as if they didn’t want to go there ever again. Sadly, such was how Krigi of new, operated. On top of the raging famine, the nobleman in charge here was; Gregory Wyne. Someone they didn’t know, nor ever saw, Gregory was but a shadow keeping the villagers from fleeing. It was but recently that

orders came from the council stating that; anyone who tried fleeing their villages and setting up camp somewhere else was to be killed on sight. It was harsh but necessary, hungry peasants can become: murderers, thieves or bandits. None can gauge the will to survive of a person.

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Thus, the bitter look of resentment and regret on their faces was justified – the order was carried out and many people lost their life. May they be children or women; none were spared. In the end, everyone gave up and tried to survive using any means necessary, whether it was to be through slavery – which was the only way to get out or plainly, suicide. Krigi of new was lucky in that respect, as other villages turned into a carnivorous den; drought made it impossible to farm, but the inhabitants in Krigi held strong until the well was exhausted. Remember about the first time when

Staxius slaughtered a certain nobleman’s child – that boy was Gregory Wyne’s child. Adding to that, the sight of how the other people lived was revealed as well.

Alyson is now on the trail of a certain unknown noble, the rest of the squad were listening to how

Staxius grew and was as a child. From the story she spoke, despite being clearly thirsty, she pressed on as if being a berserker. Her heart was filled with pride and joy, never did she know that reminiscing her old life in the company of lovely ladies could set someone at ease.

The piece of cloth separating the outside from the inside was lowered once more. Staxius quietly walked it as if a cat had possessed him. The girl, whose face yet remained hidden by the messy hair and blood; further pushed into the self-made pillow. Whimpers and inaudible sound – almost inhuman soon made itself known. Out of which was presumably frustration or anger, she started ripping the right side of the bed made of hay and covered by only a small curtain. Staxius quietly gazed at her, he carefully watched her body movements. He was trying to see if the girl was insane or plainly angry. At last, she finally spoke, “Why me... Why does it have to be me? I’m tired, I want to

leave, please... Just end me already.” Her tone was weak and fragile.

This girl was named Jessica, Staxius was now certain of that fact. The way she spoke was something unique, within her voice it felt as if a rose – that description is confusing at best but that was how he felt and described it. It was something unreal, almost angelic, too hard to put into words, he slowly approached.

A few gentle taps on her cheeks got her out of the daydream or nightmare she was in.

"P-please t-to meet you, I'm afraid that I haven't gotten the strength to work today. If you still wish to continue, I-I'll ask f-for double." She unwillingly spoke, her breathing got heavier, "Why is this world like this? Everyone I cherish or meet is either sold into slavery, killed, or plain prostitution, frankly, I've had enough." He voiced as he sat down beside her.

"I'm a-afraid I don't understa.." Her sentence was interrupted by Staxius who began humming. A song, the same one he first hummed to calm Eira, something from his past, unknown in origin but pleasant. "How do you know that song," She brusquely got up, held Staxius's face and stared intently. On the other hand, Staxius only saw a face covered with hair and blood. The realization hit, her hand began trembling, "S-Staxius..."

Out of shame, she tried removing her hands from his face – which proved to be a useless endeavor. Staxius gripped her wrist and forced her to stare at him. "P-please I-let go of my hand," she looked away. The girl still hadn't given up on getting free from him, the meeting turned into a battle of strength. In the end, due to exhaustion, she gave in and slowly faced him.

Before she could open her mouth and speak, Staxius embraced her with all his might.

"Jessica, it's you, – it's actually you."

"Y-yes...It's me." She seemed disappointed.

"Why are you so woeful, I've come to find you as promised."

"What promise... and can you let go." She asked confused and embarrassed.

"Oh – what promise indeed..." He wondered, said promise was never actually made, or so what he thought.

"Never mind that, what are you doing here?" Anger flowed, Staxius sensed it. "Are you not happy that I've come to see you again, my dear old friend?"

"Happy, please don't kid yourself – I haven't forgotten the d-day you I-left me..." Anger turned into sadness, she cried. He had no recollection of the day he left – nor how Jessica felt at that time. He only remembers that she was a very good friend, after the implementation of dark-arts; most of his memory vanished. Only the essentials were left, like his name, places he visited, knowledge about magic and the people he met and not to forget the battles he fought. Most of the childhood memories were gone – but he had some precious ones left; burnt not only in mind but in heart and one of them being, the day he met her.

Unconsciously, as she continued to cry, Jessica rested her head onto his shoulder. Staxius patted her head to calm her.

"I'm sorry," He spoke out, "I'm sorry for leaving."

"Y-you b-better be," her cries got better. Face still covered, he helped by lifting the oily hair and tied it into a ponytail – the same as he had. At last, a familiar face was revealed, she looked identical to way

back then. Her freckled nose, light brown eyes, rosy lips. Sadly, it was overshadowed by cuts and bruises.

“T-thanks,” She smiled, her head was once again rested on the shoulder that gave her a feeling of being safe. “You’re welcome,” He smiled. Up to now, her old friend was only focused on her face but now that the atmosphere was cleared a bit. Her not so virtuous state was apparent, only a piece of cloths covered her thighs and her chest was protected by the bed-sheet.

“Jessica... You truly are messed up, is that how you greet a friend, semi-nude?” He jokingly asked.

“Pfft, spare me, I don’t care, this body of mine is no longer worth hiding or protecting.”

“You’ve given up on the fact that you’re human? You view yourself as a lustful toy... What a shame...”

“STOP,” Her tone got intense, “Don’t spout nonsense about what is good or wrong, I haven’t gotten the time. To be honest, I’ve given up, if someone is to blame then it’s YOU.”

“What do you mean me, I haven’t forced you into selling yourself.”

“Shut up, you broke our PROMISE the day you left.” Adamant, her argument pressed on.

“What promise? Didn’t you just say we never had that sort of promise.”

“On top of that, you’ve forgotten that too,” She sighed.

A voice whispered, a soft voice, the one of a child, it felt like roses, “Staxie, promise me that one day you will take me along on an adventure far away and then we can be like mother and father, hehe – our family...”

“STAXIUS,” She screamed, “On top of forgetting our promise, you also ignore me, whatever,” Back to her former self, she got off the bed and was ready to leave when in one motion, Staxius grabbed her arms and pulled her close for another hug. “I r-remember, an adventure... both of us.”

“Welcome back, Staxie.” She smiled and got up

“Now then, Jessica, you still haven’t told me why you do the things you do.”

“I thought you were smart, figure it out.”

“Sorry, that was foolish of me, the village is in a bad state isn’t it.” He got up as well.

“Now that I take a good look at you, Staxius, did you do it? You manage to become a sorcerer; your dream was accomplished.” A fireball was brought forth, it was another way of saying that he had

done what he set off to do. That concluded the reunion of two friends who swore to be together, the storytelling inside the other cabin ended too.

Jessica changed into her normal clothes; her body wasn’t that exposed anymore. Her hair was still tied in a pony-tail, the gloomy look she always had was gone. Playfully fighting and shouting with Staxius, they both left the vile cabin; seeing her daughter smile so cheerfully – father Ashford rejoiced. At the same time, his party left the house directly in front. Earlier on, when Father Ashford held Staxius’s suit jacket, Eira was handed over to Undrar.

They all stared at each other, the tension was palpable. On one hand, you had Staxius with his long-lost friend and on the other, you had his party. Having heard the story of his childhood – everyone was shocked to see him act like was described. The serious and emotionless leader was playing and joking around like a little kid; that’s the effect of meeting someone from your past.

“MASTER,” Fenrir yelled from across the dirt path separating cabins, as usual, she didn’t care one bit – father Ashford nearly went deaf. “Hey,” He waved back even though they were a few meters apart. Hesitant, Jessica chose to stay back, her first impression was that those girls were too much for her. They looked imposing from the perspective of another person. “Come on,” Staxius held her hands and approached his party.

“Hello everyone, I’d like to introduce you to my wife... Jessica Ashford – and of course I’m only joking.” Everyone remained silent until Ayleth cracked. The joke was so bad, everyone began to laugh. “M-master, you telling jokes is the best thing ever,” Annet spoke out hysterically. “I agree,” Adelana followed up. After catching their breaths, everyone was properly introduced.

“Jessica, I’ve saved the best for last,” He reached and grabbed Eira who finally awoke; the sight of her father made her giggle, her cheeks were big and rosy red. “Aw, what a lovely child, who’s the parent, is it the lady with blue hair?” she asked confused. Any normal person would make that

distinction, the facial figured matched – only slightly.

“Idiot, this is Eira. Eira Haggard, my daughter.” He rose her into the air, her laughter turned into spit which then fell onto his face. “Damn it,” He laughed. “Brother, I swear,” Undrar wiped the saliva rolling down his face. “Thanks,”

“Staxius?” Confused, Jessica called out his name.

“What is it?”

“Is that your kid sister?”

“Yes, weren’t you listening?”

“Does that mean you’ve met up with your mother and sister then,”

“...y-yes,” He lied not wanting to raise the question about Undrar’s identity.

The conversation continued inside the father Ashford’s house, which was further down the street; the last one ever built. Everyone got acquainted quickly, Staxius and Jessica along with Eira played around like little kids. Nighttime slowly approached; no word had come from Alyson who left earlier on. The villagers came back from their daily duties; as usual, no one had any food to eat. Before everyone could have headed off the sleep; Staxius called in a big meeting near the well and gave out food that he fetched after seeing the state of things. Everyone had life put back inside them, they all laughed, danced, and had fun. Staxius’s arrival brought back life into the village.

\*Tsst,\* “M-master, I f-failed...” The transmission ended, before embarking onto the trip to Krigi; Staxius handed out earpieces concealed by magic to facilitate communication. He built it in such a way that it

would react to their magic and convert it into letters and send it back to everyone or him, depending on the individual. Amidst the laughter and noise; hearing that message, he panicked.

“Alyson, no, don’t tell me it’s going to happen for real. T-that d-dream... it started of j-just like this, nononono... THIS CAN’T BE.”

## [Chapter 40](#)

### A Legacy forged by death [1]

Amidst the laughter and cries of joy, a loud shout from the man responsible pierced their false sense of security. Everything came to a standstill – the face Staxius made told everything. His eyes were burning with rage – yet in the middle of that rage; a faint speck of sadness was sensed. Without uttering a word to his companion nor the villagers; he left.

“Please get back to your celebrations, Master is probably a little annoyed, one of our sisters hasn’t come back,” Adelana spoke out instantly, it helped calm the crowd who gossiped amidst themselves needlessly. It worked, everyone felt at peace once more and got back to their prior activities – may it be: dancing, eating, singing, telling jokes, and even sparring. The village was a lively place for once more, the fair yet unvirtuous Jessica spoke to her father – head to head. She confessed her sins and begged for forgiveness whom her dad graciously granted after a stern lecture. Her life was back on track into regaining its normality and mundane nature.

On the other hand – far away from Dorchester, in Oxshield; the princess had achieved her goals. Sat in a dimly lit room whose only source of light was a single candle, the princess sat. In front of her, knelt as if praying – two silhouettes, barely noticeable but present. Gallienne cackled as her dream or plan was coming to fruition. One of the silhouettes spoke, pronouncing each word with the utmost care.

“My dear princess Gallienne, our ritual, and experiments have ended. It was a great success, at the expense of...”

“I’ve heard enough, the end justifies the means, Jeff Solomon, or should I say, the sorcerer of the void.” She smirked.

“Ahh, you’ve discovered who I am.” The strength in his voice began fading.

“That is enough, princess, we’ve held up our part of the agreement.” The other voice spoke – “Now please we really have to get going.” He added impatiently. A faint breeze came in from the outside, it was enough to move the candle who enlighten the man’s face. A stern face, and an unforgiving stare.

“Commander Gareth, please, patience is a virtue – you should be grateful for I, the princess of Hidros, is personally helping you in thy conquest.” In what seemed to be a fit of rage, she rose. “Bring me the artifact, I shall perform the necessary ritual to implement this.” – held in between her index finger and thumb, a small orb. It shone fiercer than the sun, the bright crimson glimmer could

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have made anyone mistaken it for a flawless ruby.

“As you wish,” the old man agreed.

“Commander Gareth, before I begin, take this to duke Sten – your back up will arrive in a day’s time.” Like clockwork, Theodore manifested as if a ghost and escorted the commander to

Dorchester; using the same airship.

“Princess Gallienne, today you will become the first person who had a magical element artificially made, I call it, the summoner stone.” The night ended – this was before Staxius and his party reached the Krigi of old.

The day the princess spoke of was today – the day Staxius arrived. Little did he know that the princess’s powers were on an astronomical scale. She didn’t have raw magical strength; the artificial element was strong as proved by the fact that she slew forty-five guards as a test. Those forty-five guards were knights, rumored to be the best throughout Hidros – combat strength was gauged at SS-rank.

“Damn, that man is a spy for the royal family.” Hidden behind a boulder not that far away from Krigi of old – Alyson listened carefully.

“Princess Gallienne, the village of Krigi has had mysterious visitors today, they seemed acquainted.

The leader looked powerful. However, your highness, I’m sure you’re far powerful than him – please go forth with the plan to exterminate such a feeble settlement.”

From afar, a strange noise approached from the direction of the capital. It was something piercing the air and traveling at a rather fast speed – before they knew it, \*Bam,\* The princess accompanied by her trusty butler landed. Falling in front of said airship was – a head; the head of the spy they had hired.

“Damn it, the paint job is ruined by scum’s blood.” The princess spoke out as she got off – instead of an expensive dress, she wore light armor in the color of blood. Her outfit was not that revealing but it was extremely tight.

“Who stands there,” Theodore shouted. Coming out of the shadows, Alyson. The place they stood was another broken down village – the buildings were made from stone for once. It was one of the extended settlements from Krigi of old. The place had decent cover as well as space, a perfect battlefield for an assassin.

\*Snap,\* the concealment spell Staxius had ordered each member to cast on their armor was broken. Stood in front of them, Alyson – she wore her adamantite armor, she was one of the silver guardians now – not an assassin who hides in the shadows.

“Isn’t it rude to ask for someone’s name before introducing yourself,” she spoke monotonously.

“I apologize, my name is Theodore, a humble butler in the service of her royal highness,” He bowed apologetically. “Princess, how should I deal with her?” Ignoring Alyson; Theodore faced away.

“I haven’t the slightest idea, we killed the spy, now it’s time to head for Krigi.”

“Princess...” Alyson mumbled, “Are you princess Gallienne?”

“...” She nodded unwillingly. “So, you’re the one who framed lord Staxius?”

The name Staxius sent shivers down the princess's spine, a long and forgotten name was brought back from the dead. People might have forgotten this now, but Staxius Haggard was once accused of assaulting her royal highness – the reason was that that man had already died, hence, in an attempt to clear the princess's name as she was defiled by her betrothed; all the blame fell on a dead man.

"Who are you," The look in Gallienne's eyes changed – her psychotic side was coming out. "I'm Alyson Geua, no never mind, I'm Alyson Haggard, a guardian as well as a family member from the Haggard family."

"Don't make me laugh, you wretched thing, the Haggard name ended when I personally killed Staxius Haggard while he slept quietly. I must say, our meeting was by chance if it wasn't for that annual meeting conducted by Claireville academy – I might not have retained by honor; all thanks to Josiah."

"Surely you jest princess, Staxius Haggard is very much alive." With a quick pull from her right arm, she revealed the dragon insignia burnt into her neck. "As you see, this is proo..." Before completing her sentence, Theodore lunged. The first strike was blocked by Alyson who wielded a rapier, her fast movement paired with her lightning element got Theodore fighting for real. They were equally matched, strike after strike, block after block, an epic standoff between two gifted swordsmen began. Alyson had the upper hand from the start, she managed to get behind Theodore using flash step; she was ready to deliver the final blow.

\*Summoning Element, First head of hydra – the devourer.\*

Coming out of her right hand, the princess conjured a head which as the name described; nearly bit off Alyson's head. That slight misstep gave Theodore the advantage to turn around and slice her neck. The cut wasn't that deep, but she bled. Out of instinct, Alyson jumped back and used what remaining mana she had to heal her wounds.

Sadly, that didn't stop Gallienne – her face turned from beautiful to hideous, she wanted to see people suffer; the sadist came out at last. Her real personality, the devil incarnate.

\*Summoning Element, Second head of hydra – the wither.\*

The same thing happened; instead of hurting her physically, Gallienne began to sap away Alyson's remaining willpower, mana as well as strength. She laid on the ground, unable to fight, "I f-failed," \*Slash,\* Alyson was defeated.

"No, you can't die just yet," \*Summoning Element, third Head of hydra – the healer.\*

Unwillingly, the silver guardian was brought back to life, Gallienne began her favorite hobby, torture.

Alyson now bound by nails onto a random wall, the princess began to play around with her, first, she ripped off her nails, slowly. Then, began to cut her all over while ripping her clothes apart – and for the armor, it was thrown out.

"Come on, scream for me," Despite all the pain; Alyson held hope. "WHY DON'T YOU SCREAM GOD DAMN IT."

"Haha... My master will come," Her eyes gleamed with hope.



“YOUR MASTER IS DEAD,” the torture got more intense. “I’ll show you my power.”

\*Summoning Element, Fourth head of hydra – the inferno.\* A massive fireball appeared; three times the size of any normal human. “Die...” Alyson closed her eyes thinking that she was her target, however, the spell was aimed for Krigi, Krigi of new.

Meanwhile all that was happening, after her last transmission was heard, Staxius’s fear grew alongside his hatred. “Brother, where are you going.” Undrar held his arm before he could leave the entrance.”

“...” With hatred burning deep within, Staxius turned around. The remainder of silver guardians as well as Millicent and Fenrir all rushed to his side, they were worried about him. \*BANG,\* A shock-wave sent everyone flying out the village, the fireball spell landed – Staxius didn’t react in time.

Everything exploded, his heart sank, Eira was still inside.

“Eira... NOOO,” Desperately trying to repress the feeling of dread about his daughter dying, he rushed inside. The village was scorching hot, it was the same as in his dream, a girl stood in the middle, she slowly marched forward with a bundle of clothes in her hand. Baffled, Staxius stared, his feet felt a ton, he could not move an inch. The nightmare he so often dreamed about came to reality. The girl instead of crying and screaming; hummed. A song, the same song, the feeling of nostalgia overwhelmed him. The screams and cries of people burning were blocked out, she finally came into touching distance.

Held tightly inside a bundle of clothes, Jessica handed over Eira, half of her face was burnt, you could physically see the burned skin falling off. Her once fair skin was now corrupt, instead of begging for help she smiled.

“J-Jessica... I-I’ll s-save you,” He spoke, at last.

“Shhh,” Placing her index finger onto his lips, she continued, “Don’t, today was the best day I ever lived. You came back for me, and even promised to take me on adventures together, you even called me your wife, I felt happy.” A tear flowed down her cheeks, her final moments were played out in front of him. “Don’t spout bullshit,” Subconsciously, Staxius kissed her passionately, until she finally exhaled her last breath. Her body fell onto him, she was heavy.

“Jessica...” As the next god reaper, Staxius saw her soul leave her body along with the others, she smiled, her eyes were flooded with tears. Despite that, there was no regret. “JESSICA!” He shouted.

“Wait for me, I’ll come back for you one day,” she blew a kiss towards him and ascended to the hall of rebirth. Powerless for the first time in his life since childhood; with the now dead body of a former friend held in one hand while the other held Eira; he watched as the village burnt, the inhabitants ran all around. Father Ashford was nowhere to be found, that day everyone in Krigi died. The only link to his past ended.

“Ha-ha-ha,” He began laughing, “Now this is great.” A look of contempt shone, “So weak and feeble.” Something changed within, he shrugged what transpired before as if it were nothing. The eyes, once lit with something called hope and the will to live, vanished – instead, the emotionless eyes returned, he was back, the true Staxius Haggard. The only thing keeping him straight was Eira; she smiled and tried imitating the song, that same nostalgic song. In response, he smiled and kissed her forehead.

Everything was transparent, his mind was cleared of doubt; death was the only thing inside.

“Undrar,” He walked to where the shock-wave sent his party members, “S-Staxius...” she mumbled, still dazed from shock.