

The God of Jesters

Chapter 21: 2.02.2 The bedroom

Cursed texts or forbidden knowledge, there were many names for it but there was one thing that never changed. The cost of soul. The more you learn the more you give up parts of yourself and to retain the knowledge, one needs to give up parts of their soul non-stop as a payment.

It was for this reason that the knowledge about these texts is so hidden and rarely do people ever come across them. But it was not just the test that was forbidden.

Certain existences at a higher life level would have similar effects when witnessed by a mortal.

There are times when one witnesses things they shouldn't. So the subconscious mind of an individual forgets the knowledge in an attempt to save one's soul consumption.

And it was for this reason that Farhad kept forgetting the dream he saw. He never gave much importance to the dream, to begin with. But the moment when he saw the building in which that woman died, memories keep flooding in, overworking his mind and sending him into a coma.

"This shouldn't have happened, I was sure that he didn't retain any memories of the book. So why did this happen?"

Back in the library, in the living quarters, Maxim checked the state of Farhad by holding his nerves and finding nothing wrong with it. Well besides the corruption on the chest.

While the librarian that went by name Pierta Glenneth was bandaging Farhad's eyes after applying for some medicine.

"You are blind, old man. Mistakes like this can happen, next time be sure that it doesn't happen again. It was already hard to make them ignore my existence."

Officially, the Radiance might have come to Durum just now, but in truth, they have been lurking in Durum for a long while and Pierta was their agent.

In Radiance, she was part of the intelligence called Radiant Eye. A group composed of weaker members of Radiance Society whose sole job was to find dangerous elements that would later be reported to Radiance, who then send a Magistar to learn about the problem along with a hunter whose job is to deal with this problem.

Sadly for the two, the hunter that came with Maxim was not here currently.

"I might be old. But I don't make mistakes as big as this... Let's just wait for him to wake up." At this moment, the only way they can learn what happened would be to ask the victim himself.

Though with things like these, memories are often blurry, making it harder to depend on an individual's retelling of their memories.

This is why a majority of organizations and governments are incompetent while dealing with curses.

Same reason why an organization like Radiance has so much reach all over the world.

"In the meantime, call off all the blue eyes. There is no meaning to keep them active anymore."

In the Radiance society, there were a total of three active sects on the surface.

Among them, the Radiant Eye was the sect with the highest population. And to manage that, the society had divided its workforce into multiple small eyes.

And Blue eyes were the weakest, but the heart of the whole operation.

"It will be done." Pierta nodded her head and then left, leaving the blind Maxim with Farhad.

Maxim, who still remained ignorant of the bomb that was my little Farhad.

When Farhad woke up, he could see nothing. There was darkness everywhere.

In a panic, before you could even say anything, his hand flew to his eyes, to find a cloth covering his eyes.

"Don't panic, the cloth covering your eyes is for your own safety. It is absorbing the corrupted miasma, let it be." Maxim said, holding Farhad's down.

"Mis... Mister Hailey?" Farhad was surprised to hear the voice of Maxim once again. But then he recalled the scene he witnessed before. So, without holding back. He spoke out his thoughts. "I... I saw something."

Hearing this, Maxim's brows quivered.

This was not something he expected, generally, people usually forget traumatizing events or memories relating to forbidden knowledge, but from Farhad's words, this doesn't seem to be the case.

The boy was so shaken, that he didn't even question the miasma and the blindfold. His mind seemed to be focused on something much more impactful on Farhad.

'The boy is in shock.'

"What did you see?" Maxim, who still hasn't briefed Farhad on what his job may entail, started to ask questions.

"I... can't can't define it. Images are blurry." Farhad said it till this point, before holding his head and suppressing the pain. "And it hur...hurts if I try to recall them."

This is unlike what maxim expected. He considered it a miracle that Farhad can even remember anything related to the things he might have seen.

"Just define it as plainly as you can. Don't try to go deeper."

Hearing these words, the pressure on Farhad's head decreased a bit. He was not pushing deeper into memories, so he just recalled the surface details of the image.

"A woman... jumped! And there were moons." The moment Farhad said these words, he lost consciousness once again. As the blindfold wrapped around his head started to turn darker at a higher rate.

But Maxim didn't move, he became still.

"Moons?" Memories from the past assaulted his mind, he recalled the day he lost his eyes.

He can think the same future awaits the child in front of him.

"PIETRA!" he shouted, calling the librarian back to the room. And then pointed at Farhad. "He is marked, help him." Leaving these words, Maxim left the room lost in his thoughts.

As he had thought before, the boy in front of him was too weird.

He should have noticed that something was wrong with the boy the moment he showed his ability to read seven pages on his first try.

"Informing the boy's father should be appropriate, his identity is a bit sensitive." Thinking this, Maxim left the room, leaving Pierta along with Farhad.

Though in the end, he stopped. This might turn into a serious matter if word got out and Radiance might get blamed for this. This is how usually things go.

It's been a day since Farhad woke up in the library, but he just lay on his bed, thinking about his luck.

It's always him for some reason. He doesn't understand why fate hates him so much.

"You are marked by a higher entity, it would be better if you inform your family about it."

Recalling Maxim explaining to him what happened to him, Farhad can't help but curse his fate.

There was no way he could tell his father. He can't afford any more disappointing eyes from his father. So all he could do at the moment is stay with Radiant Society and find a way to fix this mark or whatever it was.

"But don't worry, it's not as serious as you might think. I was cursed once as well. And I still live." Maxim really tried to console Farhad, he really did.

But with his old and broken body, along with his hollow eyes. It doesn't help Farhad at all. Instead, he got more worried about it.

He wondered what his future had in mind for him. Would he even survive?

"Nothing goes right with me." Farhad didn't even know what was wrong with him or what this 'Mark' meant. All he knew from his classes was that it's never a good thing to attract the attention of the unknown to oneself.

'Was it the book?' Farhad even wondered this, thinking of blaming Maxim for this predicament. But after a while, he shook his head. For he knew that he might have been marked way before.

Though, not too long ago as well.

So he thought harder, his mind actively ignoring the memories and wondering when he might have been marked.

And soon, he reached a conclusion after paying a certain price.

"What have you done?" Pierta was horrified to find the bed of Farhad stained with blood. So much blood that it seemed inhumanely impossible.

But instead of panic and fear, there was a smile on the blindfolded face of Farhad. A smile filled with the satisfaction of achieving something.

"I know where I was... marked."

"My... bed... room." Saying these words, Farhad died.

A simple death with no meaning.

He died of the corruption that was eating him up slowly.

A corruption lethal enough to take his life.

He was a boy that was fearful of his father and suffered a lot from his life in his college.

All Farhad wished for in his life was one thing and that was for people to leave him alone with his books. But his responsibilities and Identity always held him back from his true freedom.

Farhad was a lot better than I had anticipated, he performed well and there was even a chance for evolution if he had survived for longer.

I was even looking forward to it.

Sadly, the boy was not talented enough and cannot utilize the opportunity I gave him. The most I could do for him was give him freedom.

And with him being free, there is a vacancy open for a core character.

So I wonder who would come and take his place.

"He died?" Looking at the note handed to her by a blue eye, my new favorite character just sighed and left the bar where she had been wasting her time all this time.

"Maxim, what have you done?"

The Hunter of Radiant, Remira Wyrwood has joined the play. And she was not alone, with the death of such a special child. Certain figures were turning their heads toward the little city of Durum.

And as you know, the more characters in the play, the more interesting it would be.

Chapter 22: 2.03.1 A new beginning.

Let's get back to the time when I came to this wonderful world. There I was stuck in the corpse, ignorant of any spells or knowledge.

All I was limited to was this weird man who was spreading oil on the corpses and speaking some prayers.

I can feel that my end was nigh, and if I don't do something, this will be it for me.

Though, it would seem the world hasn't abandoned me yet. Was it a coincidence or luck, but I heard a familiar voice.

The cacophony of rats felt like an aria to my ears.

Sadly, I have no ears, to begin with.

'Food, Food.'" Through my soul, I can even hear the words those rats were speaking, they rushed toward the corpses who had been rotting under the sun and started to eat the flesh.

While the man who was praying remained ignorant about them.

These were just rats, one can find them everywhere and there is no end to them. And the battlefield for these rats is heaven.

It's a buffet of flesh and blood, a food that will never end.

And this turned into an opportunity for me.

I don't know when I learned this technique, but I was easily able to possess the body of one of the rats before the man could throw the weird ball of fire floating in his hand. I leaped away from the corpses and ran.

Though the sun still caused me pain, causing the small rat which was still alive to smoke under it.

Though, it was not the rat that was smoking. It was my own soul instead.

Which taught me that the sun was my enemy and that using the cover of living flesh won't help me much. But this was a battlefield with trenches and the shades were everywhere. Which became my saviors.

As for the man that wished to follow me, the trenches instead made his pursuit futile. As for this man, he was still a human.

But I am getting distracted, the reason why I was talking about all of this was what I came to learn at a later date.

That man from before belonged to the same organization as Maxim. He was a low-level hunter from the Radiance society that was attracted by my cursed soul to the corpses.

And he was not the only one.

In my years of living in this world, these people have pursued me non-stop and one can even say that we have a certain history together.

It was why when I sensed these people intruding in my home unexpectedly, I set up a trap. A little boy that will become the perfect bait for these people.

Though it would be a lie that I didn't come to love this bait, I was as sad about his death as you are.

But the situation I placed him in was not the one where he would have died, the boy was foolish enough to look deeper into the situation.

Which activated the backlash I have set up in his mind.

Though, it would be a lie to say that I wasn't looking forward to that death.

"You are asking us to go even after all the proof we gave you? That place is dangerous. If not dealt with in time, things might get serious." Old Maxim said, pointing at the papers and photos.

These were the notes he brought to prove his point. It even contained a picture of the building with question marks.

Maxim was not sure about the building, he just knew it was suspicious.

Though, even after seeing all of this, the mayor of Durum shook his head. "There hasn't been a death caused by the curse in that place since its inception, but the moment you folks enter it a young man dies and not a normal young man. Do you know how it makes us look?"

The mayor of Durum was not alone, there were other officials and even the Rune academy principal was present on the scene.

The same academy that Farhad used to study at.

"I would suggest leaving this place as fast as possible, the boy's father is coming tomorrow, and I won't be able to hold off his wrath with you here."

A simple timed death was all it took to ruin the goal of Radiance.

"We have an actual case here, if you let us act we might even deal with whoever or whatever is the cause of his death. And if you choose to stop us, I can also accept that."

"But what I won't accept is leaving this place, you can't make us."

Complete insubordination. But there was a reason for all of this, Maxim knew better than anyone what happens when moons are involved in cases like these.

"Of course, we can't do that, the same way as we can't do with that little library of yours." The Mayor nodded in response.

It was true, that unless the members of Radiance go out of their way to break any rules, they can't act on them.

They are also humans and they can't be barred from the city. While being active in it was another matter altogether.

"But if we find your people doing anything suspicious, we can use that as an excuse to throw you out. Is this good for you?" The mayor asked, it was more like a condition and a suggestion.

With the boy's father coming here, it would be foolish for city officials to allow Radiance from being active in the city. So it was better to give them a suggestion.

Which was to act in moderation.

"It is."

Maxim understood what accepting this meant, but there was no other choice. The people around him might be on his side, but they were not helping him at all.

Not to mention, the principal of the academy kept eyeing him. Even without his eyes, Maxim can feel the threatening air surrounding him. Which placed him in a tough position.

With him accepting these conditions in front of so many witnesses, there was no going back anymore.

It's such a wonderful feeling when everything falls into place. Though, I am a bit sad that there won't be any more competition anymore.

Twenty years stuck in this city and it was harder to find entertaining things as time went by. The small arrival of the Radiance truly brought some color to my boring life. But sadly I couldn't let them act out in the open for long.

Now, this has evened out the playing field, as I work in the background. These people will be forced to do the same if they wish to succeed.

"When is Marshall Maisel coming here?" Remira, the hunter sent by the Radiance, asked. Her eyes lacking any drive to do work, she still asked this question.

A stupid question that seemed like she was wasting time.

"Around two days at maximum. But I would suggest against going out, there are many eyes on us." Pierta suggested as she picked up the beer bottle next to Remira. "And this is a library, we don't allow alcoholic beverages in here."

"Stop acting like a snob Pierta. You used to follow me like a canary in the academy, now see how you have turned out." Remira said, trying to grab the bottle, but failing at it as her drunk body stumbled and fell back on the couch.

"Well you see Remira, this isn't the academy and we are here due to serious reasons. There is a dead child in our hands as well. It would be better if you get your act straight before you offend the oncoming party."

From the talks between the two, one can see that they studied in the same school of sorts.

Though, this place can't be Radiance, as there were no schools backed by Radiance. This goes to show how back these two's relationship goes.

So hearing those grand words, Remira just scoffed and said with a drunk tone. "Why even bother... hic. The old fart will just come and impede our work anyways. It's better to give up and let the people..."

"Don't say it Remira, don't say things that you might regret later." This was not a threat, but a genuine suggestion.

The companionship between the two was a lot closer than it looked on the surface.

This would be interesting. Sadly, I can't act too early. I might know a bit about Pierta, but I can't say for sure about Remira.

She was a wild card that had been hiding since coming here. And I am closer to omniscient and omnipresent in this city.

Which makes me like her even more.

"Oouho, Sorry. I am just sad our mission got ruined by a small mistake." In her drunken stupor, Remira said. Apologizing soon after.

"It was no mistake. Elder Maxim was also marked with a similar moon mark, and these marks attract each other." Pierta explained.

In the supernatural world, the fate of a real thing, and there were no coincidences. Things that were meant to happen will happen.

Or so these people thought. Not knowing how easy it is to manipulate fate if one is focused enough.

"Oh, I didn't mean this, I just mean we fell into a trap." Suddenly, Remira's drunken act vanished. Parting her small hair from gray eyes, she brought a small piece of broken wood to Pierta.

"This was something I found from the bed of the dead boy. His bedroom truly was special." It was a broken piece of wood with some inscription drawn in the language of old.

While the runes were familiar, the language used here was only known to a few in this world.

So I wonder if this smart girl who wasted time with her drunk act would be able to find something from it.

Or whether it can lead her to me or not.

Oh, and that smell of hers.

It's been a while since I smelled something so strong.

Chapter 23: 2.03.2 Unexpected development.

"He did say the source was his apartment," Pierta recalled the last words of Farhad and how happy he seemed after pinpointing the cause.

But to most, it just seemed like delirious talks of someone dying. They had searched the rooms before and hadn't found any sign of foul play. No curses or supernatural beings were detected.

Maxim even went as far as to do a source scan, losing one of his fingers in response. But the result remained the same.

Nothing was detected at that moment, which made the situation hard for this small group from Radiance.

But, Pierta never expected Remira to bring such a huge clue to them.

"So what language is it?" Remira asked, curious about her finding.

"All I can say for sure is that this is from the mundane world, nothing else." The moment Pierta said those words, Remira got confused.

The knowledge about the mundane world is known to few and its culture is even harder to learn about. All the world knows is that magically stops working in that world and one loses all blessings after transferring over it.

It's a punishment specifically used for irredeemable individuals that are hard to kill. And the gate to that world can open only during a specific time.

And from what Remira knew, it's been almost four to five decades since the last time a gate to that cursed place was opened up.

As for why Remira was confused. The languages in the mundane world are, how to say it, mundane.

They don't hold any magic unlike the runic of the sun kingdom or the writings of sylphs. So she wondered, why would one leave those writings around the runes on that wooden slab under Farhad's bed.

"Whoever inscribed this, is a learned individual."

"So you are sure it was an individual targeting us and not a supernatural force?" Remira wished to confirm this wondering whether it was something she could kill.

And to her expectation, Pierta nodded with a sigh. "If a supernatural force was at work, it would not need to use these methods to deal with us. Someone is targeting us. Someone that doesn't wish for us to succeed." Pierta might not know the function of the runes on the slab or what the writings meant. But she knew their enemy was just a human and nothing more.

If it was not illusory, then it can be killed.

"But why would someone wish to stop us from cleansing this street?" Pierta wondered, ignoring Remira who had started to enjoy her beer to celebrate her great find.

Remira didn't stay in the library for long, they still had two days before Marshall Maisel arrives to take over his boy's body. And when he arrives, it would become harder to move as much.

"Wonder how that old cot will react to it?" Remira wondered, recalling the eyeless face of Maxim, before turning around the corner and looking for a cab.

Her next course of action was simple; ignore the cursed street and focus on the death of Farhad as she finds the one responsible for marking the boy.

She even wondered what kind of individual was capable of this. Because a mark is not simple, it's the sign that someone is under the gaze of a higher entity, and most of the time, it doesn't bode well for many.

Farhad was the greatest example, and the second was Maxim himself, who was marked by a greater entity.

How he saved his life, Remira didn't know. All she knew was that one day he had his eyes and the next time they were gone while Maxim aged by decades at once.

Which tells the price he paid to retain his life.

One shouldn't look at Maxim and think he is an old man. He was just 45 years old this year, but his body looks like that of a 70year old.

"I am here." Getting out of the cab, she stared at a stone slab in the middle of the city. A slab around which there was security standing around.

"The security is unusually high." She wondered, but her answer was soon answered.

A car, pitch black silently drove next to her, giving her goosebumps in the process.

This attracted her attention, the radiance in her blood was boiling, wishing to get out and kill the entity. But she soon calmed her body down and only stared at the car.

'An unmarked car?' Being someone that has focused most of her time on training, it was hard to learn about the model of this vehicle. But she can feel the slight hint of rune craft from the car, which told her that this was expensive.

And few were able to afford something like this in the city.

'A bit shot.' Remira thought, staring at the car silently.

And when the doors of the car opened up it was the face of an old man. But calling him old would be a disservice to old people, as this man seemed closer to being mummified.

'That cane, the headmaster of Lucien's abode, the academy that the boy went to.'

The aura of the headmaster was icy cold, making her blood of radiance boil, unbeknownst to her.

Which attracted the old man's attention.

– "A Hunter from Radiance?" The lips of the old man didn't move, but everyone around the headmaster heard those words clearly.

Causing the handlers of the headmaster to go on defense, sending goosebumps to Remira.

'The meeting ended too soon?' She scoffed, cursing Maxim for not being able to hold back this old man for long.

But now that she was found out, there was no reason to lie or feign ignorance anymore. So without any more delay, she bowed and introduced herself.

"Remira Wyrnwood from the 21st generation of Radiance hunter, it's a pleasure to meet you Headmaster Kariut."

Ignoring the wary gazes towards her which were ready to attack her anytime. She fearlessly moved her body and introduced herself.

A power play and a display of respect toward the headmaster.

But this small act didn't calm the anger of the old man. So in his usual deadpan tone, he asked her. "Then Remira Wyrnwood of the 21st generation, what are you doing at the gates of my academy?"

His voice sounded in everyone's ears, a voice that held a mocking tone. The old man was plainly aware of why she was here, he just wished to know what her excuse would be.

But to his surprise, Remira's answer turned out to be a bit unexpected.

"I just wish to visit Farhad Maisals dormitory. His death was random and leaving the dormitory to live in some dirty apartment didn't seem to gel for someone of his background." Remira was not the kind to shy away from her fault, if she was found out, so be it. She will use this to her advantage. "So I wish to check if there was something wrong in his dorm that directed him to leave it for the outside."

Hearing these words, the surroundings got silent, before one of the handlers reprimanded Remira. "I would suggest, you should choose your next words carefully. Otherwise, we won't be able to ignore any more of your offenses toward our headmaster anymore."

From Remira's words, one would think she was blaming the academy for Farhad's death, and in a way she was.

Claiming that something or someone in the academy drove Farhad to live in that cursed apartment building would push the blame of his death on the academy as well and at the moment no one wishes to hold this hot potato. Farhad's identity was a bit too sensitive.

"Offenses? I never intended for any of that. I am just doing my job and only wish to do a small investigation in your college, nothing more." Remira explained her intentions clearly. But from the way things were going, the chances of success seemed infinitely low.

– "Miss Radiance Hunter, the academy is not open to strangers, not in times when one of those strangers might be complicit in the death of one of our students."

– "So the answer is no and it would remain as such unless you are absolved of all your crimes."

– "And till that happens, I would pray that you stay away from my school for your own good."

The moment the old man stopped speaking, Remira felt a strange pain in her head, causing her to stumble back a bit.

She can feel something wriggling in her head, like a worm.

Something that was soon burned by her blood.

But it still left her in shock, and when she looked up, the old man had already left with the teleportation slab turning inactive.

"I failed."

She might have known this, but she didn't know how big of an opportunity she had just lost. But if she knew, there would be no reason for her to come here

and deal with an old man who held similar hate for the Radiance society as I do.

Which made him an unlikely ally in this whole game.

But I have spoken too much about it.

Let's go back to our Heroine, who left the scene with a disappointed face. There was no method to infiltrate that college unless the stone slab was used.

No method for now at least.

"Hmm?"

But while going back, she paused.

Hmm, I wonder why she would stop at this time. But guess I don't need to worry as she started on her way back to the library.

Who am I kidding, each action of an individual has a meaning and if she stopped then there must be a reason for that as well.

Which by the method of elimination would leave with one thing.

"She is suspicious about me. What a wonderful little girl, it's been a while since someone was capable of noticing my presence. These Radiance bastards never disappoint me."

Chapter 24: 2.04.1 Chaos beginning to set in.

There she was, wondering what or who it was that was keeping a watch over her. Her mind wondered.

Was it the killer? The man behind it all?

She even wondered whether ignoring the individual in that alley was the right thing to do. Who knows, if she had chosen to pursue that individual, many of her answers might have been delivered to her.

Even if she failed, she might still have learned something about the enemy at the very least. And she was going to pursue him, but something in her blood told her to wait.

It warned her about something.

If she had followed her rationality at that moment, something bad might have happened, so she stayed put and left the area.

Which was a tad bit disappointing for me and her.

If only her senses were stronger. If only she was like the ones that I previously met, those that came close to killing me.

But I am expecting too much from a new recruit.

She was young and had a whole future ahead of her, just like Farhad.

Whether she can achieve that greatness will depend on her alone. And no one in this would help her, not even me.

So with a downtrodden mood after losing two consecutive clues in her hand, Remira got back to the library. Much to the surprise of Pierta.

"Back so soon?" She wondered, knowing that Remira was someone that likes to be thorough with her work. But being part of the Radiant eye, she was not clueless of why this might have happened?

"Failed with what you were doing?"

"Yes, and badly. But at least I found that someone had truly been following us."

"Probably the individuals that were responsible for this totem... right?" At this point, the voice of Maxim came from the side. His fingers move along the wooden board that Remira bought previously from Farhad's apartment.

Feeling the carvings inch by inch, a dazed expression appeared on his face, and then it turned a bit melancholic.

But with his lack of eyes, none of the women in the library noticed this, instead, Remira just nodded. "Probably yes, I don't see why anyone besides our enemies would be so keen on tailing me."

"Are you sure it was an enemy? Might be a third party?" Pierta tried to confirm. Coming from her background, she was well aware of how many third parties were interested in Gregory street, besides the Radiance.

Many wish to study the dream domain here, while only a few wish to end it. There are even some who treated this place as a tourist spot due to the random dreaming one suffers from.

"That I can't say, but there are only a few who can keep up with me in this city if I tried and at that moment, I was trying." By trying, Remira meant her method of hiding from the eyes that must be following him.

And knowing the personality of the Old man from the Lucien academy, there was a high chance that he might send his hounds at her.

It was a well-known fact that the Headmaster of Lucien didn't like Radiance Society at all and was one of the biggest hurdles when Radiance tried to enter this city.

Or so she was taught, but from what she could sense, the only man never bothered with her and let her go without any problem while someone else instead followed her.

Which in and of itself was a scary thing. Who knows what was the intention of this third party, he might even aim for her life.

Or so she thought, but poor Remira was not aware that I was completely harmless, I can't kill anyone or even influence much, I was just lucky with Farhad due to the boy's weak mentality.

It's not every day you find someone with such a weak personality that influencing them becomes so easy.

So at the moment, I had no means to stop her. If she wanted, she could have purified me. And if she wanted, she could have ended these dream shenanigans.

But she seemed smarter than this, she didn't ruin the game and was playing her part perfectly. It's not every day that you find such great characters in a story.

"Then our enemy is good. No, with this small slab, I am sure that he is a lot better than we might expect." Maxim said, beating the slab in his hand.

To which, Remira, who was disappointed after her recent failures, stood up and asked Maxim. "So you have a clue on what this is?" There was a hint of radiance in her eyes, a sign that her blood was active to extremes.

Much to the surprise of Maxim. Who once had the blood of radiance coursing through his veins.

But he didn't say anything, he was not someone to put their nose in other's business anyway.

"You can say that. This is one of the languages from the mundane world, but I don't know which one and what it means."

"I would have to send an imprint of this to the Heart to get any answers."

The heart of Radiance was the hub of Radiance society that existed only in a few selected locations in world. With the closest one where the three originated from was 800km away. And it would take around three days for it to reach there by train and by adding the additional time, it would take around eight days at the minimum.

Till that time, the group would barely be able to do anything on the clue.

"Even I knew that this would be the case. Tell me something that I don't know." Remira said, well aware that someone like Maxim couldn't be learned in useless language.

Which put the poor old man a bit off, before he responded with a sigh. "I just know one of the runes in this, it's either a dream or a nightmare. The domain of sleep."

The language of runes is ever-changing and there are multiple different signs for a singular word due to the nature of power that is used.

But it doesn't mean that they were hard to deconstruct, and for someone as learned as Maxim, whose sole job was research, this was as easy as butter.

As one shouldn't forget that Maxim hadn't been with that wooden slab for more than an hour and he had already deciphered one of the runes.

"Sleep once again. It might be the medium through which he was marked."

The entity that is currently looming over this street was sleep related as well. Which made the two events connected.

"This truly was a great find, Remira. It made our work easy and we also have more proof for our thesis."

Maxim sounded enthusiastic, but there was also some dread hidden in his voice, old memories kept surfacing in his head, and even the piece of wood felt heavy in his hand. But he reigned in his emotions from going haywire.

He was hiding something that he didn't want others in his group to know about.

As for why he was doing this? Even I was unaware of it.

The reason for it was simple. Maxim had been marked before, but not by me but by a similar entity that left his soul dirty.

And I can't feel the thoughts of individuals from all that murkiness. A cleaner soul like Remira is more to my liking.

It's radiant and bright like moonlight, even the pain it gives to me is peaceful. She is strong-willed and I like her due to this.

Rarely do I find someone that can detect me and she was the first one in a while, and it was for the same reason.

When the headmaster of Lucien infected her with a parasitic worm that ate away at her brain, it activated her radiant blood which burned the worm before it could do any harm.

And it was due to her blood that made her soul stronger, making it easier for her to notice me.

But I have already found the reason, I won't make the same mistake again. Nor do I wish for the game to end so early.

Now let's walk a bit further from the library, but still on Gregory street.

There was a group of men in black clothes standing in the basement of a potion shop. Each one had an eerie aura around them and all of them sleeping.

They slept while standing still.

"Wake up, we have some guests." The man who was the owner of this potion shop ordered, waking up this group of people.

"Your eyes are red, it would seem the dreams haven't been kind to most of you," he said, looking that most of these cloaked individuals had red eyes and black blood leaking from their noses.

With the exception of one small silhouette. Someone the shop owner knew.

"As expected of our little enigma, you truly are special," he said, applauding the strength of the little child. "Come forward." He ordered this individual who looked like a child under the cloak.

"Yes sir?" In an adolescent voice, the child asked. Curious and a bit fearful of the potion master.

"You will lead the mission this time, and your job is a simple one." Then the man pointed at the papers. Which he took out of the bag.

And then, he pointed at the face on the paper, a face that looked slightly similar to Farhad. "You have to assassinate Marshal Maisel."

Although unaware of who his target actually is, the boy just nodded out of fear and then backed off, taking the rest of the cloaked individuals with him.

"Opportunities like this come rarely, don't miss it," he said in the air, not caring whether his words reached the ears of someone or not.

But I can say, it sure reached my ears.

And I sure am looking forward to the mayhem that might happen in the future.

Chapter 25: 2.04.2 Unexpected meeting

When it was known to the city that a marshall would be visiting it. There were a lot of murmurs. But none knew the reason why he would be coming here.

They didn't know about the death of Farhad nor did they know that he was the son of a Marshall.

To most that were in the know, he was just some unlucky boy that died and nothing more.

But to others, his death was a disaster in itself.

"Arrogant," Remira said, looking at the face that resembled Farhad to a fault, with the only exception being the eyes.

She might have not seen Farhad when he was alive, but she can know that he was nothing compared to his father.

A father, ignoring the welcoming party organized by the mayor and the news reporters looking for a scoop, approached Remira and ordered.

"Take me to your Den." His voice was heavy, holding the authoritative flair to it. Which made Remira back off a bit.

But that was just her body reacting to the imposing figure of Marshall. Her words on the other hand showed none of this weakness.

"It would hurt you to be a bit polite?"

Those around her, including the mayor's associates that came to welcome him from the stations, were sweating hard when they heard these words. They feared that the Marshall might do something bad in anger.

They didn't do anything besides go silent. No one wished to intrude on this conversation, if this woman wants to die, then so be it. But they won't go in to calm the situation down. And instead, they were doing their best to not attract any attention.

Though, what these men didn't expect was a completely nominal response from the Marshall. "Sorry for before," Maisel said, shrinking his aura a bit. Before requesting Remira. "Can you take me to Maxim?"

Now it was Remira's turn to be dumbfounded. She didn't expect that Marshall would be this normal?

From what she had heard from Maxim, this man was brutal and a pain in his ass most of the time. So what might have caused such a change?

But she doesn't care about all of this. Her job was more on the field and after taking this military man to Maxim, she is going to go on a walk and enjoy it.

The designation of a Marshall was a special one in the army. Higher than all the officers and directors under the general with one exception.

A marshall listens to no one besides the General of the army. Not even the Prince of this country can force him to do anything. But in return for this, the freedom that one obtains after becoming a Marshall is immense, they even had the right to use their abilities in public if they wished to.

An honor afforded to a select few.

Farhad's father was one of those Marshalls. A man of focus and commitment that sent his son as a punishment far away from his home.

And now the same son is dead.

Did he blame himself for this? Who knows?

He was a marshall and someone I can't sense the feelings of, he was strong, probably the strongest in the city of Durum at the moment.

And he was here with vengeance.

Or so, many thought about it this way. And the group from Radiance was not alone.

But to their surprise, the words that Marshall spoke were a lot more amicable.

"I will go straight to the point. Don't let my son's life go to waste."

A surprising request from the man with almond skin and gloomy countenance. He was a lot calmer than he initially appeared to be. Which was odd considering that his son died in the presence of Radiance, an organization with which he had more than a few disagreements in the past.

I might have made a small mistake. The father of the boy was a lot more cordial to the ones responsible for his death, which was a bit unexpected.

"It would be a lie to say that those words are not odd. Considering they came from your mouth." Maxim said, surprised as ever, but there was no inking of joy on his face. He was just curious as to why the sudden change in treatment?

He had expected blowback from Marshall Maisel, a suppression that would make it harder to do their job. But one of them happened much to his surprise.

And it would be a lie to say that I was not the least bit thrilled with this unexpected change in the flow.

It turned a bit harder for me. But this has its own appeal I guess.

"Magistar, we both might not agree on certain things, but that is due to my duty as this country's protector."

"And today, I am here as a father, not a marshall." He was well aware that Maxim was not the kind to kill a child, instead, Maxim was one of the very few people who he respected.

But due to his hash personality, he struggles to show it to people properly. "Even if I might be from the military, I still have some knowledge about the occult and understand what might have happened."

"So, even though I feel some anger towards my son's death, I know that you had nothing to do with it. He was weak and hence he turned into a perfect puppet."

It would seem that while the Marshall might not be in the city, he was well aware of the proceedings in the mayor's office and his eyes have done their work as well.

He was well aware that his son was manipulated and used in a trap to disturb the relationship between the two parties.

And more than that.

"Which I don't wish to. I only follow the General and I don't intend to become the sword for someone else."

There it is, the heartlessness that Maxim was used to.

He even wondered if Maisel even cared about his son's death or not. He seemed more hurt by being manipulated than the death of his son.

There was even a chance he might be cursing his son for the problem he had caused.

A problem that the poor boy was not even aware of.

"This... then I truly appreciate this," Maxim said, before giving the General the inscribed text from the wood that Remira found.

"This appeared below your son's bed in the apartment he rented with one of the runes targeting the dreams."

"This is how he might have been marked," Maxim explained, not the least bit offended when the piece of paper flew to Maisel's hand.

The real piece of wood had long been sent to the Heart of Radiance in Wortham Principality. This was just a copy.

"So someone led him there? I presume this is what you mean to say?" Farhad's father asked, his eyes curious about why Maxim would give such an important piece of information to him.

Usually, this kind of information would be hidden by other parties for fear of sabotage. But Maxim was not worried about it at the very least.

Because the man he showed this to was not just a marshall, but the father of the victim as well. And no father would wish to sabotage the people investigating their children's death.

"Of course that is. Instead of going home for vacations, the child went ahead and rented a dirty apartment and the next day, he came to me for the job. The timing seemed a bit off and too coincidental."

Maxim was on point, this was truly a bizarre series of coincidences and not to mention, all of it was a bit too perfect.

Almost as if he was being watched all the time.

Sadly, what the old man didn't know was the true extent of the fear and shame the boy felt for his failures in front of his father.

To the boy, living in a dirty apartment was a lot better than facing the disappointing gazes of his father and the cruelty he suffered from in his college.

Which made him one of the easiest individuals to influence.

"That is suspicious."

Farhad's father was not the least bit affected by these words, he never even considered why his son could be so easily led to that place. To him, he also treated it as a case of pure manipulation.

But I don't possess that level of ability. The most I could do was influence weaker-minded individuals, I can't push them to do what they would never ever consider. That's the limit of my ability.

Though a father that considers himself perfect and just an individual, this would be a hard fact to fathom.

This father might not even know how much hate his son had for him.

"His actions were known to me, he had requested the funds for that apartment from myself. But at that moment, I didn't think deeply enough and gave in to his request." Maisel recalled the phone call and how busy he was that day.

From what I recall, he accepted the request of his son without even hearing properly what his reasoning was.

"Which was odd for him, he is not the kind to ever live alone. He had never even experienced the harsh reality of the world. So living away from dorms was a clue. I should have picked up on it." Maisel said, his voice a bit low. Being aware that if he hadn't given out the funds his son might still be alive.

But that single moment of emotion stayed for only a bit before he turned to Maxim and asked. "So that was suspicious."

Then, Maxim explained. "The call came out from the Lucien Academy, am I right?"

An obvious question and Maisel nodded at this point. But then he paused. "He was targeted in the university?"

"Yes, the same university that has closed down its doors to our investigation."

Seeing that Marshall Maisel had agreed to collaborate with them in the investigations, Maxim didn't hold back and put down his request.

"We need an entrance to the university."

There was a high chance that the headmaster might have cleaned up the place where Farhad frequented regularly. Anyone would in this situation.

If something was truly found out in the academy. The name of Lucien would be sullied, and the reputation of the headmaster would be ruined along with it in the wizarding community.

There is no place for an academy that can't protect its students in the whole world. So if they were incriminated, the Lucien Academy would be ruined.

This was one of the reasons why the headmaster hated the Radiance Society so much.

But in truth, more than hate, it was fear.