

# Son of the Hero King

## Chapter 23: CH 23: OPEN HEART

"By the way teacher. Don't you have something to explain to me?"

"Hmm?"

Currently, Sol was reading a rather thick brown-covered book titled dangerous zones in the world.

It was a rather interesting book written by one of the angels living in Slothstein.

Edea, meanwhile, was elegantly sipping on her tea when she heard his abrupt question.

Intrigued, she put back her cup on the plate and threw a questioning glance at Sol as she queried for him to elaborate,

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, what kind of spell do you always use to make me forget about confessing to you?"

"[Sto-]"

"By the way, I wrote a memo about me asking you this question today. If after reading this I remark that I have not asked about it I will understand that you did something to me."

An awkward silence permeated between the two. Sol didn't even bother lifting his head from his book as he flipped another page.

Still, even though Edea couldn't see his face, she could feel that he was quite angry with her.

'This is the first time right?'

She was quite surprised then incredibly flustered. Sol never got angry with her. He could be awkward, shy, bashful, or anything but she never saw him get angry no matter what she did to him.

This realization flustered her quite a bit. She stammered a little, but still couldn't properly express herself. None of her usual poise was present at the moment.

Finally, she simply sighed as she lowered her head,

"I am sorry. But I didn't... "

"Please do not try to explain anything when saying sorry. Apologize for what you did wrong. Do not add arguments. This was something you always taught me. Adding things like 'but' and 'I couldn't help it' changes apologies into excuses."

It was rather a surreal scene to see a hundreds-of-years-old witch being scolded by someone so much younger than her. But Edea couldn't laugh, even more so since it was her own words that were being thrown back at her.

"I—I am sorry."

\*Sigh\*

Sol let out a tired sigh full of frustration as he closed the book he couldn't concentrate on, he briefly entertained the thought of simply getting up and leaving but that would be dumb. It would just make him lose the advantage he so desperately managed to grasp.

"I don't really need to know why you did it. After all, I know why. I am also truly thankful because I know that you are simply thinking about my own good. But...this does not make it right."

"... When did you find out about it?"

"Hum. Since the beginning?"

Edea raised her head so fast it looked like her head would snap off her neck.

"What?"

"I mean, please don't underestimate me. I know myself. I remember that one time I swore to confess to you, but weirdly enough I didn't. Back then I chalked it up to forgetfulness or shyness. But once it happened twice, thrice at every single instance I seriously began to doubt."

His mocking smile was rather grating, but Edea could do nothing more than simply stare at him in guilt.

"If you knew, why wait until now?"

"Because soon I will have my awakening. You remember that as a prince I can make one request to Luxuria right?"

"NO!! ABSOLUTELY NOT."

The vehemence in her voice as she leaped up from her seat and slapped the table with her small hands was a surprise both for him and for her.

Taking a deep breath, she steadied herself as she spoke, "If you use your wish for something stupid like being able to touch me without being affected by the curse I swear I will close all access to my dimension."

Her threat was real. Sol could feel it. She wasn't joking. But— So What?

"So? Even if you close it, I will just have to become strong enough to break your jail open. I will never allow you to live your life in this glorified golden prison you call home so this will be two things done at the same time."

"You..."

She was struck speechless by how bold he suddenly became.

"... Why are you acting so selfishly? Please, Sol, don't do that. Your wish is something that could empower you extremely or give you great advantages. Don't waste it on someone like me."

A serene smile formed on his face. Even though he was still seated while Edea stood, she suddenly felt as if she was the one who was being looked down upon,

"Teacher. I wonder. When will you stop playing the role of the tragic princess? Why do you always use those words?"

"What?"

Once again his words struck her dumb to her very core. This time though it was followed by an incredible feeling of anger and humiliation. She was just about to blow up when their gazes locked.

'Why? Why are you looking at me as if I am some pitiful child?'

"Teacher. I do not and will never understand your pain. Hundreds of years of weeping over the betrayal of your first love is something I simply cannot fathom."

Edea closed her eyes at his words, her fist clenching and her body shivering in melancholy, but Sol acted as if he did not notice.

Seeing her in pain pierced his heart, but he could not stop. This was an occasion of the likes he may never get again. If he gave her time to calm her emotions, nothing he said would reach her anymore.

So, he simply decided to go all out,

"Please believe in me. I'll definitely try to do something about it. Even without my wish, I should still have a way to deal with it."

She shook her head. It was impossible. If he let her do that, he would die sooner or later.

"I've already worried about it... I've already thought about it. I've already suffered... that's why— I gave up."

"It's easy to give up, but..."

'It's easy to give up?'

An incomprehensible shock shot through Edea's whole body the moment those words entered her ears.

It felt like the shock of being struck by thunder from the top of your head. The inability to put it into words took form as an explosion of anger within her chest. Her whole body was ruled over by a sensation that felt like all the pores throughout her body were open and burning.

"You said it's easy to give up?"

"Teacher?"

"Don't give me that shit! There's no way in hell that giving up is easy."

Her emotions full of unbearable gloom exploded as they bore onto her tongue and were spitted out as curses. She even forgot her usual elegant way of speaking.

"Do you think that I'm giving up, completely discarding everything, throwing everything and anything away, without doing anything and without thinking about anything at all?!"

Her whole body shook as she did her all to hold in the tears that hadn't fallen in hundreds of years.

"It wasn't easy to give up! It was easier to think that I could fight and do something! But I was helpless. There was no path to take! I couldn't continue on any path other than the one of giving up!"

Even if she challenged it and challenged it, even if she fought and fought, even if she polished her plan hundreds or thousands of times, even if she entrusted it to others, the only result was an inevitable failure.

"If I could do something about it... even I... even I..."

She also had a maiden heart. She also wished to fall in love again and be loved back, to hold the hand of her loved one and become one with him, both in body and soul, to wake up in his arms and later down the line to sire his children.

"Teacher."

Sol called out to Edea, whose head was facing downwards, and he had eyes filled with an amalgam of emotions.

Edea on the other hand was filled with immense shame. She was disgusted by how her shameful side was exposed and couldn't look up at his face.

"Teacher... It's easy to give up."

"..."

"But..."

The gloom of her innermost thoughts, her dissatisfaction, and her sentiments that seemed like an outburst of anger...

"... It doesn't fit you, teacher."

All of those things vanished when the boy she always cared for made such a straight declaration filled with absolute confidence.

"I don't know what type of rough feelings you've been through, or what you've done that made you suffer like this. I know I shouldn't rashly say something like I understand it too."

"..."

"But... but even then... there are things that I understand."

"..."

"I know that teacher isn't someone who could give up on something midway. I know that you aren't someone who can give up on the future."

Edea was overwhelmed by the fierce radiance brimming within his eyes.

Because after all, this couldn't have been anything but a misunderstanding by him; it was a misunderstanding that was so wrong to the point of it being humorous. It couldn't be anything other than an overestimation of herself as a person.

Edea didn't understand just how precious, just how triumphant of a person she was in Sol's eyes, but she knew that she wasn't anything like the version of her Sol imagined her to be.

She was a coward at heart. Despite all her powers, she stayed in a prison she could have left anytime she wanted because she didn't wish to face the outside world.

Even though she was betrayed, she smiled because she did not wish to face the harrowing truth.

Even though she felt alone, she smiled because she did not wish to cry.

Even though she wanted someone to help her, she smiled because she did not wish to break her pitifully snobbish pride.

"Tha... I'm not that kind of person... I—I"

"That's not true. Teacher is one of the greatest persons in this world for me."

Sol stated and continued to deny Edea's resignations.

"What do you, just what do you— just what do you know about me!?"

Her violent emotions that flared up in her chest burst out as a violent scream.

She raised her infuriated voice and the world as if answering her wrath began to tremble under her all-encompassing might. The wind picked up pace and the earth rumbled. Clouds gathered in the sky and a cold wind replaced the previously refreshing breeze.

This was the full might of Edea, known as the witch of time. Sol currently felt so small, so weak in front of her. Just a thought would be enough for her to completely crush him.

But...his gaze never wavered.

"I hate myself."

Edea murmured quietly, but her voice boomed and echoed throughout the world.

"I'm empty. I have nothing inside. No doubt about it.....aah, it's obvious. Of course, it's obvious! Do you know what I did all the time from the day I was imprisoned in this tower until the day Mars and then you opened this door?"

Sol stayed silent as he let her vent her bottled feelings.

"I did nothing."

She slumped onto her chair as if all strength had left her body, her eyes were devoid of any emotions as she blankly stared up and the world that was previously trembling menacingly began to calm down.

"My rotten character was created all because of my powerlessness and incompetence...! I don't do anything, yet I want to accomplish everything. It's the height of arrogance, don't you think?"

Hundreds of years passed by idling and moping, crying over her pain, and acting as if she was the saddest being in the world.

Of course, she made research, she accumulated knowledge and became powerful, extremely powerful at that, yet,

"It wasn't as if I was trying to become strong or trying to make things better...I was simply taking a clear pose, a facade to show that it wasn't like I wasn't trying and that I was putting in an effort. It was simply to justify myself..."

She was abandoned by the man who swore to always care for her and always protect her from all pain.

Even though her teacher, her very own mother told her to not believe in him, even though her sisters told her that he was suspicious.

"Even when I decided to help you with studying, it was just a front to cover up my embarrassment! Deep inside, I'm just a small, cowardly piece of filth who only cares about my appearance. Deep inside, nothing...! Nothing has changed!"

Attacking with a strong voice, blaming others, and finding a reason, a sort of excuse for matters that didn't conform with her convenience would put her at ease.

She felt at ease without seeing her true self.

She felt at ease without showing her true self.

If her exterior remained unpeeled, she could feel at ease from not being able to see what was inside.

Even after spitting everything out, she still couldn't get the strong feelings in her chest that were similar to nausea to disappear.

Was it not a given that she should feel a bit lighter after spitting out everything that was stockpiled in her chest?

'What will he think? What will he say? Will he be disgusted? disappointed?'

"I see. Teacher is truly a worthless slothful and without any redeeming features."

'Ah~! So this is it.'

Her heart felt a pain never before felt, even the betrayal of Jupiter didn't feel as painful as the words spoken by Sol.

"But— So what?"

'What?'

She raised her head in shock and looked at the eyes full of compassion of the young boy seated in front of her.

"You know, teacher, no, Edea. I do not care about how ugly you think you are or how much you hate yourself. I just wish to know more about you. About the things, I already know and about those, I do not."

The unconditional love and trust Sol had for Edea made her feel an unprecedented level of unease.

She cursed at all those wrongdoings, exposed all those unsightly yet true feelings, exposed her facade that was full of lies, and confessed that she was garbage beyond saving. But even then...

"Why—just why are you looking at me with eyes that are filled with affection? Why? Why are you so insistent about me? I'm weak, small, and cowardly. I hide my weak interior by acting as if I was so full of wisdom. Tell me why? What do you see in me?"

"Why? Do I really need to spell it to you after all this time?" Taking a deep breath, he punctuated his words with a carefree smile full of conviction. "Simply— because I love you, Edea."



