

NORTH X NORTHWEST

Chapter 11

{ “Y...Your...Your Majesty, that has been attempted countless times over the last few centuries...”

“Silence! The navigation skills of the Empire are superior to those of the past, and the fleet is incomparably strong. Northern continent this, northern continent that! Isn't it strange that due to the existence of this northern continent, it feels like I have to look at a mere subject as my superior? As if that sea towards the North only opens up to him!”

“We will fix it, Your Majesty.”

“The northern continent will be in my hands. With the 3rd Prince Robero as the Commander, I dare ask to get rid of this burden.” }

Robero, the brilliant third prince, had not been in touch even after the seasons changed. Had it not been for the huge number of corpses and shipwrecks that had washed up on the northern shores of the mainland, the emperor thought he wouldn't see any of them ever again. Sesbron trembled in fear at the remnants of history repeated horribly. More than half of the imperial fleet was completely annihilated, and not a single survivor nor a rescue ship had ever returned. The people of the northern part of the mainland said they had removed bodies, floating in the water, for months. Eventually, a rumour spread throughout the empire.

...Monferrand Strait only embraces Retiro's descendants...

The terror-stricken emperor was forced to believe in that preposterous tale. Not long after, the imprisoned admiral was reinstated, whether he wanted it or not.

Half of the imperial fleet was gone, Mondovi's fleet took the largest hit and lost over $\frac{3}{4}$ of its capacity, making it impossible to even dream of defending the waters without Admiral Retiro. The emperor shed blood and tears, promising all kinds of rewards in the hope to get that admiral back in action.

Finally, there was a person that pulled the right strings and was able to send the man to the South.

The emperor escaped from his memories and looked at the clock.

'It's almost time for him to come.'

As soon as that thought crossed his mind, the lord chamberlain announced the visitor.

"Your Majesty, Duke Mireille."

"Oh! Let him enter!"

Soon, a tall man walked through the door. Unlike the emperor, whose age began to show on his face as he grew older, the duke was born with grey hair and was quite handsome. His eyes didn't hold much depth, but his straight nose and smile were attractive. The emperor always liked that Mireille looked dignified even though he was not a swordsman.

"Your Majesty."

The emperor came down from his throne and patted Mireille's shoulder. This hospitality wasn't unreasonable as the duke was considered the saviour of the emperor's troubles.

"Do you want something? I'll bring you everything you want!"

"That's too much, Your Majesty."

"No! I had been suffering for a long time, but thanks to the Duke, I can live comfortably. I can't let this kind of appreciation go."

“Are you that happy?”

“Of course! That Admiral. I feel like my itchy ass has finally been scratched! Oh, let’s try this, René. It just arrived.”

The emperor took a bite of the fruit and happily offered one to Mireille. The duke looked briefly at the fruit in his hand, roughly the size of a fist, and thought about the correct way to eat it.

“But René, how did you convince him to go down to the South?”

“I’m sorry, Your Majesty. Unfortunately, I can’t tell you.”

“Huh? Tell me. I supplied your merchant ships with heavy artillery as a token of my gratitude. Wasn’t it necessary? Of course, you were the first to help the imperial family, but it was I who stopped the protesting navy.”

“ ... ”

At the mention of the cannons, René flinched.

‘How do I retain his support?’

“I will continue to support you even in the long run. How about that?”

“ ... ”

‘I’ve already lost 4 of those cannons on their very first voyage, to the Black Whale no less, that damn bastard.’

“Are you trying to monopolise the Marquess? Is that what you’re hiding from me?”

“That’s... that’s not fair, Your Majesty.”

“Then why don’t you say anything? Do you think I won’t believe you?”

“ ... ”

“Sir Edgar isn’t a man that can be swayed easily in the first place.”

“It may be so, but...”

The Duke’s eyes fluttered open. He stared at the fruit in his hand for a while, smiling awkwardly. In the meantime, the emperor stopped talking, unable to endure the silence, Mireille opened his mouth.

“I just told him a short but interesting story.”

“What’s that?”

The emperor looked at the duke with an expression full of anticipation.

‘What kind of interesting story made that eccentric admiral fly to the far South?’

He couldn’t help but be interested. It had to be a great story, but Mireille’s lips were stiff. He was about to open his mouth again.

“Actually...”

“Oh, okay. So, what’s the story?”

“Isn’t Sir Edgar a collector of ancient art? I just assumed there must be things in the South that would suit his pallet. So, I had the old myths of the southern islands researched. Afterwards, we selected an island that he might be interested in and informed him about it.”

The emperor was not very pleased with the duke’s answer.

“Is that true?”

“What?”

“Is that all?”

The duke skilfully hid his lies and smiled.

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

Lil stared at the ceiling, a spider was walking on a tightrope. It walked up and down, came and went, making her uncomfortable. She couldn't tell if she was disgusted with the appearance of its round body and hairy legs, or if she was disgusted with herself.

Whenever she felt uncomfortable like this, Lil looked back on her past actions. She recalled the recent voyage and tried to figure out what made her so distressed. Scepticism and self-doubt were all over her.

'A world that buys and sells people as slaves makes me furious, this life frustrates me... and Cesar...'

She could hear Cesar breathing. No, it was a lie that she could hear it. Cesar made no sound, for he was just breathing evenly. Comfortably. Lying down naked. Like her. Suddenly, the blanket that touched her bare skin became unfamiliar, so Lil lifted it. Both her feet fell on the floor, and soon hands picked up the clothes that were scattered all over the room.

'This night, he was rougher than usual, probably because I came in dressed like a prostitute yesterday.'

Lil threw her dress and shoes into a corner and picked up her normal clothes.

Cesar tossed and turned.

"You should sleep some more."

Lil sat on the bed and picked up her shirt.

"Lil? Why are you... Did you wake up? Did you even sleep?"

"I couldn't sleep."

It was a lie.

"..."

"There's something about that Admiral."

Cesar seemed to believe what she said. There was no response or answer, but she knew.

'He's exceptional and extraordinary in his logic, analysis, and observation, but he's deceived by me every time. Big things or small, my lies are never caught. It wasn't because I'm a natural liar or because he was particularly weak against me. He just chose to believe. To not believe, one must doubt, and Cesar would rather stab himself than have doubts.'

"Liloa."

Lying back down, he pulled her shirt from behind. His action slid open her clothes, which she hadn't fastened properly, revealing her chest and legs. She looked messy. The same was true for him, who was staring at her calmly.

'If I want to run, I have to run now...'

Cesar did not lessen his strength.

'Right now, if I don't run away...'

The sleeves slid down her arm.

'When did he move?'

However, Lil didn't make an effort to look back at him.

'It will be of no use if I'm trying to run away.'

"Cesar."

She was naked again. Lil bowed her head, watching his hand caressing her thigh. Her eyes closed like a dying lamp.

'Cesar knows my body well.'

Laying down, Lil quickly took off his hand. In fact, their foreplay never lasted long. Because she was always in a hurry.

Soon Cesar buried himself deep inside her body, and the two began moving up and down together. Lil hated this part the most, the time between the foreplay and the climax.

'All I have to do is close my eyes and hold my breath, but whenever I hear a sound, I can't help but listen. If possible, I want to rip them off. Those damn ears.'

As she listened to the unfiltered and muffled sounds, her body flinched.

'I hope it's over soon. Please.'

Lil pushed Cesar hard, making him roll over. She climbed up his slippery abdomen and moved her body quickly. Her hair fell on Cesar. Lil didn't avoid his burning eyes as moans erupted from both of them when their bodies shook.

Eventually, Cesar covered her cheek with his hand and asked sternly.

"Liloa, do you love me?"

Lil hugged his neck. As their bodies were tightly pressed against each other, his body heat soaked through. She felt like she was about to burn or melt at any moment.

'What would happen if we just disappeared like this...'

"Yes. I love you."

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