

## Runesmith 323

### Chapter 323: Hostile Takeover.

"I see..."

The pale light of a crystal ball faded as the magical connection had been cut. The man before it continued to nervously tap his desk while thinking. Ever since the dungeon appeared in this city he wasn't sure if he could consider it a blessing. From what had become known to him now, it seemed that it could be turning into a curse.

"My Lord."

"You can come in."

The door opened up and soon a person dressed in a maid uniform entered. She was quick to push the curtains blocking out the sun to the side. This illuminated the inside of the room and revealed the city lord's face. His gaze was plastered on the round object on the desk, it was clear that the news that he received wasn't the greatest. Before the maid could ask about the issue he started speaking out.

"Our backup plan won't be arriving for another day, we might be out of luck this time around..."

"I'm sorry, Lord Arthur, it's all my fault if I had been able to impede them for longer..."

"You did your best, I'm surprised that they made it here this fast, their leader must be an indifferent individual... But in the future, I'd like you to refrain from using those types of underhanded means."

"Yes, My Lord..."

A sulking Mary was bowing down before Arthur. Both of them were inside the villa that used to be the Mayor's house. Since they had arrived here the building had gone through a renovation and finally began looking like a proper home for a noble. With the sunlight shining in through the window to this office they could see out onto the courtyard. There some soldiers along with the staff were gathering to receive their new guests.

"What about him?"

"He said that he doesn't wish to be involved in things related to nobles..."

"That's what I thought, can't really blame him."

"He's just an ungrateful coward, I knew we couldn't trust him."

"It's not like we trusted him to begin with, our little alliance had a shaky foundation from the beginning."

Arthur shrugged while weakly smiling. The person that they were talking about was probably the only one that could help them out in this time of need. They already knew about Lord Commander Emmerson the moment he appeared at the city gate. Soon he would make his way over to the villa without them having any proper protection.

"However, without the Guild Master's help, this will put me in a bind..."

“Are you going to sign it, Lord Arthur?”

“...That depends...”

The city lord started thinking of the issue he was facing. The hired muscle that was supposed to be here to act as a deterrent wasn't here. Without having any allies in high places there was no one to ask for help or even for a deal. Other nobles that resided on this island didn't want to have anything to do with the Valerian house. They did not want to catch the ire of any of the sons of Duke Alexander without getting offered a proper payment.

No one in their right mind would provide backing for Arthur who was the least likely to achieve success. Some didn't even consider him to be part of the race for the duke title due to his shaky birth. This meant that the young man would need to work extra hard to even out the playing field. Now on the other hand, with the Rank B dungeon in his territory, he had become a valuable resource that the other brothers would attempt to conquer.

“What about the other offers?”

Mary looked at the desk that had some paperwork laid out on it. Theodore Valerian wasn't the only one attempting to get access to the resources from the new dungeon. He was just the one that was the closest to this location. Even if he was able to handle the knights that arrived in his city today, this wouldn't fix the issue.

Arthur was the fifth brother from the line according to age. This didn't mean that he was the youngest as their father continued to foster more prospects. During this short time span he received two other letters from other siblings that were asking for the same thing. While they couldn't legally force him to sign a contract, there was no one stopping them from being persuasive.

Each and everyone that he was going up against had their own hired help. This came in the form of strong adventurers, mercenaries, and even more unsavory types. It wouldn't be strange if the knight that arrived today wouldn't leave unless he signed whatever contract he brought along. If he refused then there was no telling to what length Theodore's men would lower themselves, using force was probably not off the table.

“Oh, more of the same, Theodore's men just arrived the fastest. Perhaps if we can prolong the discussion enough to buy us some time, they could hinder each other.”

“But will they arrive in time?”

“I don't think we have any other options, for now, we can only delay...”

Arthur clicked his tongue in indignation. There was really nothing that he could see doing to avoid this confrontation. It was as if the world was against him. Perhaps the people that he was trying to pull to his side had already been bought out by his siblings and it was never meant to be. Without proper protection and time, there was no chance of him ever competing with those brothers of his.

They were treated differently, from the start they were given experienced knights as helpers. Their territories were already somewhat established, they just needed to know the basics of managing a fief. Other people were quickly drawn to those places offering money and power. Working for a duke's son

and possible heir was a very attractive offer. Soon they were commanding large armies with multiple tier 3 Knight Commanders.

To Arthur who wasn't even given a knight of that status this felt unfair. His brothers were able to just send out a person of such power with leisure and one of them was now at his doorstep. Normally, if he had gained the loyalty of a Knight Commander rank person then no one would be able to bully him out in the open.

They wouldn't be as brazen to send a large force like this into his territory without any approval. As it stood now, they were not afraid of any retaliation, they were clearly not afraid of any repercussions that could normally come out of attacking a fellow noble.

"What's done is done, perhaps we can talk things over, our helpers might still make it in time. More importantly, do you have any word of their movements inside the city?"

"Yes, they have been gathering up our associates, they split into several groups and they are gathering up people associated with us, merchants, business owners, even adventurers."

"I see, they intend to make a scene..."

They were gathering up people that were associated with his name. They were probably not in danger of anything and were just there for the spectacle. It seemed that he would be publicly shamed in front of his associates and retainers. Probably after he was forced to sign the contract, the Knight Commander would force him to make a speech. In it, his brother Theodore's name would certainly be mentioned as how he was the real lord of the city.

"They really want to make me look like a fool in front of all those people, are they even going to bring him along?"

Arthur clenched his fist while looking outside the window. There he tried glancing into the distance towards the forest area. His associate that created a lot of helpful gadgets was living there. It was well known to everyone that the city runesmith was working for him. It wouldn't be strange if the knight dragged him over here to take part in the scene. Wayland was smart so there was no reason to be concerned about this issue, instead he was more concerned about the forced speech itself.

After making such an

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and word spreading it would be over. In the noble circles, he would become just a henchman for Theodore, his brother. While he didn't care about his name as much as the others, it carried a meaning. No one would associate with him anymore and treat him as a lackey, regaining his foothold would become impossible. He would probably be forced to accept an overseer inside of the city. This would turn him into nothing more than a puppet.

"Halt! Identify yourself!"

"Hmph, mere soldiers dare stand in my way? Stand aside if you wish to keep your heads."

"Make way for the Knight Commander! Don't you see the crest you fools?"

The commotion that was taking place at the entrance gate could be heard by Arthur. The guards that were placed there had been picked and trained in a more proper manner. Even though they knew that the other knights belonged to the Valerian household they wouldn't just let them through.

"Mary, go out there before someone gets killed."

"Yes, My Lord."

After the maid left he gave out a sigh. The people that he was assembling weren't all bad, some of the soldiers were even loyal. He had given them weapons and a place to stay. The more they were in his service they more a sense of belonging started blossoming. Yet now, if they saw him capitulate in front of the first real obstacle, everything could be over. Still, he could not let the men just perish, those knights from his brother's side would make quick work of them.

He could hear the shouts thanks to a runic device that had been installed within the gate walls. Wayland had placed other such devices through the whole compound that made communicating a lot easier. Thanks to this Mary could quickly take hold of the situation without even arriving at the front gate.

'Would those runic turrets be able to contend with a tier 3 knight?'

Knight Commander Emmerson waltzed forward while covering his face with the helmet. He reminded Arthur of his associate that also usually didn't reveal his face out in the open. The defensive turrets were installed in a couple of places and were a potential threat for the unwelcome guests. Yet, the tier 3 knight wasn't the only problem as many other well equipped soldiers arrived as well. Their shields looked magical in nature and their numbers weren't small.

'Many people would die...'

For a moment he contemplated the nuclear option. He could claim that Emmerson started it all but his victory wasn't assured at all. When he thought back to the Lich monster that was able to easily crush the defenses of the man that created these turrets, then he started calming down. The man was a different type of fighter but the weak magical attacks that these runic machines offered would probably not work.

Soon he could see the group entering inside and spreading out into various areas of his temporary home. It was clear that they were trying to take over all the strategic locations. They wanted to assure their victory before anything started. They weren't attacking anyone yet but were probably ready to turn this place bloody if he didn't comply with whatever they wanted.

'It might be better to go out there, perhaps those turrets can act as a deterrent...'

Arthur smiled at himself as he wasn't sure what he was even thinking about. His face didn't show it but he was under a lot of stress. Without seeing a way out he could only think about bluffing. Yet, even he didn't believe that these bluffs would amount to anything. Leaving the city was also not an option as he had no place to hide. Perhaps if he had a powerful backer it would be possible to take a break at their villa. Otherwise, his brothers would just announce that he abandoned the city and take it over without him being there.

"I wish to speak with your master, Maid. Show me the way."

"Lord Arthur is busy, have you made an appointment?"

Emmerson, the leader of the group, arrived in the middle of the courtyard. His gaze fell on the magical instruments that were pointing at his head. The maid that tried to welcome him was mostly ignored as his eyes darted around the compound. It was clear that he was checking for potential threats to his mission. After a few glances, he finally moved his hands toward his helmet which was then slowly removed to reveal his rather bored expression.

“A rogue type? Were you the one?”

“I don’t know what you are talking about?”

Mary didn’t flinch but deep inside she was scared. The man had a strange presence that was unique to tier 3 class holders. Anyone that was below this tier could feel a certain pressure applied to them. It also didn’t help that the man before her was quite large and above two meters. Together with the full plate armor that he was wearing he looked like a walking tank. It also didn’t help that he was able to ascertain her hidden class through a glance which was worrisome.

“It does not matter, you’ll be under supervision soon, the ravens could use someone like you.”

“What are you...”

“Silence, Where is your master? Bring him out, I need to speak to him.”

Mary gritted her teeth as she realized what the man was doing. Emmerson was purposely talking around Arthur’s name. This was something that happened when knights didn’t respect the noble they were interacting with. Proper etiquette forced them to refer to Arthur by the name of his noble house. Yet it didn’t seem that this powerful knight had any willingness to show proper decorum.

“What do I owe this pleasure, I didn’t think my dear brother Theodore would send such a prestigious Knight just to talk to me.”

While Mary was left wondering about her reply the doors to the estate swung open. There a handsome young man with long white hair and green eyes appeared before them. His face was all smiles to mask all the worries on the inside.

Emmerson was sure to look at the man before him. Even though he didn’t want to admit it, there was a certain charm that this person was radiating. At first glance, there wasn’t really much that made this young man similar to his older brother Theodore Valerian. The two came from separate mothers and it seemed that the younger one didn’t receive much from his father besides the eyes.

The gaze, even if mild, reminded him of his own liege that he had sworn himself to. Then there were those long white locks. It was more than likely that they were lengthy to cover up the blemish on the side. Arthur Valerian was a known half-elf and his ears showed that fact. There were various types of elves in this world and to Emmerson, the lineage was also unknown. The coloring implied that the mother was a moon elf that were known for their snow-white locks compared to the golden ones the sun elves possessed.

“Lord Arthur, I presume?”

“How dare y-...”

"It's fine Mary, the Knight Commander is probably tired, why don't you fetch us some tea? How about instead of the stuffy mansion we have this talk out in the garden?"

Mary nodded while disliking the fact that the Knight wouldn't mention Arthur's full name. She wasn't sure why they were switching to the outside garden area but considering that the runic turrets were also there, it made some sense. This point didn't go unnoticed but it didn't seem that Emmerson or his knights were perturbed by the magical devices. Perhaps the fact that there was a mage in the midst of this group of soldiers had something to do with it.

Within some time they all arrived at a nice garden with something that looked like a large gazebo in the middle. Inside it, there was a large table with chairs around it, the area was designed for holding conversations with other nobles during events or get-togethers. It wasn't suited for large knights like Emmerson which was causing the regular chair to strain under the weight of that bulky armor.

"Would you prefer black tea or maybe something exotic? If so, Mary here could conjure up one of her special blends."

"Lord Arthur, you know what I am here for, let us discuss the issue of the dungeon."

"Hah."

Arthur didn't really know what to say to the glaring knight before him. His people were all gathered around the area as well and ready to go into battle. The situation didn't look good and he didn't know if his silvery tongue could get him out of this situation. Yet before the conversation could really switch toward the dungeon topic, an unforeseen event unfolded before him.

"K-knight Commander."

"What is it? Why are you disturbing our conversation?"

"I understand Commander but we have been attacked!"

"Attacked? Who dares to attack the Knights from the Valerian household?"

Not soon after coming to the garden and sitting down an armored soldier rushed inside. He looked to be out of breath and in a state of distress. Something had happened and by the conversation, some type of fight had taken place. To his knowledge, there didn't seem that there would be anyone stupid enough to cause a disturbance with Valerian Knights. Either one of his other brothers had arrived to fight for the rights to the dungeon or someone extremely reckless had appeared.

"Knight Commander Emmerson, you're the leader of these knights right? Come out, unless you're too scared to face me in a proper duel."

"Huh? That voice... Wayland?"

To Arthur's surprise, he heard a loud voice that had been probably magically enhanced echo through the entire compound. It belonged to someone that he knew but the words didn't make any sense. Why was Wayland here and why was he trying to challenge Emmerson to a duel?

Previously he ignored his runesmith ally as he didn't see him being able to help. There was no sense in calling Wayland over as he made it clear that in a fight between nobles, he would not lift a finger. Now

for some reason, he was trying to challenge a tier 3 Knight Commander to a duel. It was known to Arthur that Wayland was probably a noble himself, could he have finally decided to drop the disguise? If he actually did, what could have maddened him enough to go to this extreme?

### **Chapter 324: Not So Gallant.**

“Thank you for your patronage and please come again.”

“Will do!”

A door opened with a bell sound as a rough-looking adventurer stepped through it. In his hand, he was holding a new magical longsword that he had been saving up for. With it in his hand he felt like the monsters on the deeper levels wouldn't pose as much of a threat as before. While walking through the forest he quickly unwrapped it to examine it closer. The design was quite simple but the runic symbols on the blade and how his mana was able to circulate through them freely, told a story.

“This is one of the best enchantments I've ever seen... Now those damn salamanders don't stand a chance, can't wait to see those guys blue with envy!”

His grin was apparent as he wanted to show this weapon to all of his adventurer friends. Previously their party leader had bought a shield from the same shop and after seeing it at work, everyone else wanted an item for themselves. Now he was the second person to get it and he would be sure to rub it in.

However, while going through the road out of the shop he suddenly halted in his tracks. It took a moment for his mind to process a few things but when it did, with haste he bolted to the side to make way. The weapon he was so eager to use made its way behind his back to hide it from view. In no way did he want to show that he posed any sort of threat to the people that were approaching.

“...Whew... that was close... but why is a group of armored knights going to the magic craftsman? They didn't seem to lack equipment... I should probably tell the leader about this.”

His eyes were filled with fear after seeing the group pass by him. They looked strong and were armed to the teeth. The crest that was imprinted on some of their shields and armor pieces belonged clearly to the Valerian noble house. The fear of nobility was ingrained in the very being of every commoner, he could not help to step away and hold his head down even if he did nothing wrong.

“I hope that store lady will be fine and there was also that young lass at the entrance...”

The man quickly started running, there was nothing good that could happen from staying here too long. Even though he felt bad for the people in the shop, there was nothing he could do there. There were some bad rumors concerning some of the knight orders from this household. They weren't a unified faction, there were many Valerian siblings and each had their own sub-knight order to do their bidding. He could only hope that the ones that were going for the store, were more of the honorable bunch.

...

“Hey, did the boss say when he will be back? I need him to look at something.”

“Hm, I don't think he will be back for a few hours, he said he wanted to buy a few things?”

“Aye? Well, when he comes back.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll send him right over.”

“Haha, Missus you’re a lifesaver.”

“Hey, stop calling me that.”

Elodia and Bernir were having a little conversation in the store which left her blushing slightly.

“It’s only a matter of time now.”

“...”

“I’ll head out then, Jorg should be finished by now, have to keep the boy occupied or he’ll get lazy!”

Bernir laughed while leaving the store through the backdoor. The day seemed very peaceful and the weather was fine. After Roland returned from his trial the workshop was ready for a change. His two half-dwarven workers had been given the task of going through their stock and drawing up some plans for more rooms. This time they would be going even further down and even installing a contraption that would somehow bring them down to the lower levels automatically.

“I need to tell Dyana to knock some sense into him.”

“Worf?”

“No Agni, you can’t bite him.”

“Woof!”

Elodia was left with Agni inside the store, the ruby wolf usually spend his days around here and acted as a deterrent against potential shoplifters. The only problem was that he had gotten slightly too large for the inside. That ruby tail of his would sometimes knock wares off the counters and thus he was relegated to sitting behind the counter without much room to move.

On the outside, Marcie was greeting the customers and also waving to them as they left. It actually seemed to work as people entering the store were usually in a better mood after seeing the cute girl outside. If this actually increased their sales were still debatable but at least it made the atmosphere better.

“It’s slow today, usually there are at least some window shoppers around.”

It was strange not to see more people at this time of the day. New adventurers were arriving at the city after the dungeon

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was made and their clientele began to expand. Yet for some reason, there weren’t that many people appearing today. Perhaps it was just a slow day or some other event was pulling their customers away.

“Grrrr...”

“Agni? Is something wrong?”

Elodia looked at the ruby wolf that just a moment ago had a silly expression on his face. The tongue that was usually flopping out was exchanged by sharp teeth. It was quite unusual for him to act this way and by the growling sound, it couldn't be anything good.

"Could monsters have appeared in the forest?"

She was a person that spent a big chunk of her life at the adventurer guild. It wasn't that strange for stray monsters to wander through these areas. Most of the time they tended to evade large human settlements or even this reinforced house area. They could somewhat feel the magical energies coming from this place that activated their preservation instincts. This mostly worked on the weaker monsters but stronger ones would ignore such signs and instead be attracted to the potential prey.

"Marcie, come inside."

Even though Agni could have been reacting to a person this didn't mean that they weren't in danger. With haste, she walked out from behind the counter to go outside. If something dangerous was there, then the child that was greeting customers was in danger. Even though they had a person from the adventurer guild act as a guard there, it was better for her to go inside.

"Is there something wrong, Big Sis?"

"Just come into the shop for now."

"Um... okay?"

Marcie didn't really ask many questions as she moved away from the spot she was standing. She was old enough to know when Elodia was being serious. Just as she was going through the door she noticed Agni moving in closer which made it harder to squeeze through. The ruby crystals on his mane weren't the softest and could even cut a person.

It was clear to Elodia that something got Agni spooked as he was placing himself in front of her and Marcie. The adventurer that was on guard duty today was not someone that she knew too well. Grisalde and the rest of the group that arrived at the city with Roland weren't here today. They had set off to the dungeon to earn some money and get involved with the new part that housed stronger monsters.

This man was someone that she loosely knew from her old guild days that was considered somewhat trustworthy. If a monster attack did happen he would not flee in fear unless the power differential was astronomical. Luckily the whole area was outfitted with magical turrets that had been repaired after the incident with the Lich. If something like that appeared then she needed to get everyone to safety and use the hidden escape route.

'Roland can't be far away.'

Elodia thought back to what he had mentioned to her in the past. The area was outfitted with strange magical devices that he called sensors. She had no idea how they worked but Roland assured her that if something happened he would be able to tell. If a monster was wandering around the forest then perhaps he was already running back to be of assistance.

"Is this the place?"

"Yes, Lieutenant. This is where the Runesmith lives."

“Good, move according to the plan we discussed, and be careful, you never know what you can find at a magic user’s home.”

“Yes Sir!”

Finally, they showed themselves, the trouble that arrived was a lot more grave than she expected. It was not a monster but something entirely different and worse. From within the forest, a group of knights emerged. They weren’t hiding their conversation and she was quickly able to pick up the reason that they were here.

‘What do they want with him? Does it have something to do with his noble roots? But that crest, it’s the Valerian one, could they be Lord Arthur’s men?’

The thoughts raced through her head quickly as she tried to grasp the situation. Her heart started racing as more of the armored men emerged. One person from the group looked a bit different, he was wearing light armor and a robe over it. With the staff he was carrying on his right side she knew that it was a rare magic user and not someone that Arthur Valerian should be able to employ.

A conversation that she had with Roland a few days ago popped into her head. Then they discussed the Valerian Household in its entirety. Arthur was only one of the many sons of Duke Alexander Valerian. There were usually only four of the sons that were considered valid heirs.

The first one was called Julius Valerian, the oldest of them all and the one with the most backing. After him was the second son Theodore Valerian that had his base of operations in a region nearest to Arthur. The third one Ivan Valerian was known for the fiasco during the Abyssal Cult outbreak not so long ago. Then the fourth one was Tybalt Valerian that had rumors circulating about making some bold moves into Ivan’s territory after the blunder was made.

‘Could it be one of them? Roland mentioned that something like this could happen.’

Elodia was aware of the worth of the rank B dungeon. It wouldn’t be strange if it became an asset for the siblings to fight for. Normally Arthur Valerian had all the rights to it as it appeared in his territory that was given to him by Duke Alexander. The brothers were supposed to use these given resources to widen their influence and prove themselves. While he had the rights, this didn’t mean that he couldn’t sign over the rights to one of the siblings or even work together with them.

‘I need to calm down, if they are with the other nobles then they are here for one thing...’

The situation was quite nerve-wracking but escalating anything wouldn’t help. There were more than fifteen soldiers here and some of them looked like professional knights. Even if she didn’t want to, there were certain rules that needed to be followed. A knight wasn’t truly part of the noble cast but something in between. Yet one thing was certain, as a commoner she needed to heed their orders. There was no way to know what they could do to her or the people around her, with powerful nobles backing them, the knights here were the law.

“You there, Woman.”

“Yes, can I help you with something, Sir, Knight?”

While Elodia was racking her brain for some answers the leader of the group that they referred to as the Lieutenant pointed out to her with his finger. He was wearing a full suit of armor with part of his face sticking out through the visor. There was a certain grin on the man's face as she was replying with a proper bow. The way that he was looking at her was similar to some of the drunk adventurers with ulterior motives. She was not the only one that noticed as Agni's growls became even louder.

"Wench, quiet your beast down."

"Y-yes, my apologies."

One of the armored men shouted out from the side while putting his hand on the hilt of the sword. Elodia instantly started trying to push Agni back into the shop to keep him from attacking the overbearing soldiers. If he actually attacked one of them it would be over, not even Roland would probably be able to diffuse the situation then. As it stood now, they probably wanted to take him in for questioning. He was an official member of Arthur Velerian's side and in a sense part of the household. There was no reason to fight as everything could be resolved in a peaceful manner.

"He just gets excited when he sees new people."

While trying to laugh it off, Elodia managed to push Agni back into the store. It wouldn't be possible for her to force him in but the ruby wolf was well-behaved enough to listen to the order. Soon the door was closed and both Elodia and the adventurer were left behind with the group of armored men. It was clear to her at a glance that the man would probably not do anything if things got rough but she couldn't really blame him for it. One wrong move and his life could be over.

"We came for Wayland the Runesmith, where is he? Is he inside? Our Commander doesn't like to be kept waiting"

"My apologies but Wayland is out on an errand... but he should be back soon."

"He isn't here? Are you serious?"

She wasn't sure what the problem was but the leader of the group looked annoyed. Ever since arriving at this place they were all acting strange and looking around. Their gazes also landed on the magical turrets that were pointing in their direction. It was surprising as most people that arrived here had no idea what these magical devices were.

"Lieutenant, what if the wench is lying?"

"Yeah, what if they just want to buy more time, the commander will be angry if we don't bring the Runesmith over in time."

"That is true..."

"W-what are you."

The group of knights continued to walk forward while talking, they found themselves at the doorstep. Elodia was far too stressed to move out of this spot, she was afraid that if she actually started running that something could go wrong. In the past she heard about stories where knights abused their power, some would seek for the faintest excuse to exert force against a commoner.

“Please stop... why are you doing this?”

“Now that I’m this close, you aren’t half bad why don’t you join me for tonight.”

“Haha, look at him go, he does this in each city.”

“I bet he will get rejected again.”

The Lieutenant towered over Elodia who was stuck standing in front of the store. The adventurer on the side started backing away as he knew that this didn’t look good. The knight grasped her chin between his thumb and index finger while forcing Elodia to look up to him.

“... Should we be doing this, won’t the Runesmith be back soon?”

“Newbie don’t be a stick in the mud, this is the best part of being a knight, just relax. The Lieutenant is just being a bit playful, just keep your eyes peeled at those things, you know what kind of place this is.”

One of the knights that was standing in the back voiced some concerns about the whole situation. He was shot down by another one from the group and told to just watch. Instead of looking at the woman that was being harassed his gaze fell toward the runic turrets.

“Please...”

Then suddenly the situation escalated further. Elodia’s body reacted on its own by trying to push the hand holding her chin. The Lieutenant’s grinning face contorted into something ugly as he felt the resistance.

“You dare strike me. A Valerian Knight? You? A worthless whore? I think someone needs to be taught a lesson.”

Elodia didn’t even know when it happened but a metallic taste entered her mouth as she found herself down on the ground. Her cheek was red and her head was spinning. The men that were around her were constantly laughing and the man that initiated the hit was doing the same.

Yet this wasn’t what started the trouble as soon after the sound of glass on the side entered her ears. It was followed by a ferocious growl of an angry dire wolf that quickly tossed himself at the man responsible for the injury to her cheek.

“Agni... NO!”

She could only look in horror at the armored men going for their weapons and shields. The magical devices that were meant to protect her and the hose began glowing as the battle that she was hoping to avoid unfolded before her and there was nothing that she could do to stop it now.