

Evil 156

Chapter 156 - 156: A game of wits.

All the knights charged at the same time, but suddenly a ring of fire appeared and spread out toward them. All the knights ignored the fire because their armor was enchanted with a magic formation to deflect Mana.

When they uncovered their faces, Rasmus was gone, only Aris stayed. They swung their swords without hesitation, but some unknown force prevented them from hitting her. They imbued their swords with Aura, but to their surprise, the Aura dissipated in an instant.

"You're all dead men walking," Aris said and threw a spin kick at them and broke their breastplates that were supposed to be resistant to heavy damage, close to impossible to break.

All the Knights couldn't get back up because they all had broken ribs that made it hard to breathe. They were crawling and trying to stand up because their sole purpose was to protect Anastasha even if it cost them their lives.

Rasmus was watching from the roof after he distracted the knights and flew away from the battle. He knew Aris was getting bored of not playing around, and he had to feed the beast once in a while to keep them tamed.

A man walked out of the mansion and saw the knights on the ground, defeated. He didn't expect his knights to get defeated that easily and how their breastplates to get cracked. He stared at Aris as he walked toward her with a quarterstaff in his left hand.

"Can you please spare my men?" The man asked and stared at Aris whose face was hidden under the hood.

Aris took a step forward and a strong force pushed all the knights away. The man knew how strong she was the moment she showcased such power. He knew that she could do more than that when she could do something like that so easily.

He knew he couldn't win, but he had no choice because there was someone he should have protected with all his life. He imbued his quarterstaff with Aura and dashed toward Aris as he swung his staff with all his might.

He was stunned when Aris stopped his attack by grabbing the staff with her bare hand. That attack could break a thick steel wall into small pieces, but it got stopped that easily.

He slowly looked up to look at who he was dealing with, he saw the bluish-white hair and bright blue eyes underneath the hood. His eyes widened and he immediately jumped away from her after he realized he was fighting against an ancient race. He wasn't surprised anymore when someone could stop his attack with bare hands.

"Andrei, that's enough..." Anastasha shouted as she stared at the knight with a serious expression. "If she wants me dead, I'm already dead by now, so don't waste your life for nothing."

Andrei bowed his head and immediately dropped his quarterstaff. Aris was disappointed because she wanted to play some more.

"How are you doing, Princess?" Rasmus asked as he looked down from the roof.

Anastasha and Andrei looked up at the roof, they were in disbelief there was someone there. They couldn't sense him at all, and when Andrei was about to grab his weapon again, Anastasha raised her hand, signaling him to stand down.

She recalled the voice because it made her remember what happened that night. She then saw Rasmus jump down from the roof and land in front of her. When she watched him pull down the hood, she finally saw his face more clearly than last time.

"Rasmus Blackheart," Anastasha muttered and stared at Rasmus's eyes back and forth. "How did you find me? Nobody should know I'm here..."

Anastasha glanced at Aris and then back at Rasmus.

"Let's talk inside..." Anastasha said as she nodded her head. "They're my esteemed guests, treat them like you treat me," she looked at Andrei with a serious expression.

Andrei bowed and then went to check on his men who were in pain on the ground.

Aris looked at Anastasha's outfit, a onesie like an elegant jumpsuit made of silk. It looked both comfortable and good at the same time. She thought all women had to wear complicated and suffocating dresses.

They went to the parlor and the maids hurriedly made tea and snacks in the middle of the night. There was only silence in the room because Anastasha couldn't believe she had met a Blackheart and an Orthias, two people with white hair.

The maids came in and filled the table with snacks and tea. As soon as the maids left, Anastasha cleared her throat and grabbed her tea cup.

"It's an honor to meet you in person, Lady Aristoria," Anastasha stared into Aris's eyes without a single fear in them and then lowered her head gracefully.

Rasmus and Aris were intrigued by Anastasha's confidence and lack of fear. There was something about her that made her different from being arrogant, the confidence that she showed was different.

"You seem to know a lot for a princess from far away, Princess. Even Archduke Thalior and the others didn't know Aris's existence until I told them about her," Rasmus said with a faint smile on his face. "I bet you have so much information and secrets that the world is trying to hide," he narrowed his eyes.

Anastasha smiled gently as she nodded slowly. The way she sat, the way she placed her hands on her lap, and the way she looked at them, they were all screaming gracefulness. However, Rasmus knew that someone like her was nothing that could be exploited because of that confidence in those eyes and behaviors.

"I have so many pockets and I can provide any kind of information by simply looking at the right one," Anastasha answered and took a sip of her tea. "I know a lot about you, Count Blackheart. You're an interesting fellow, and should I say unique?" She tilted her head slightly and stared into Rasmus's eyes.

"Seeing you come all the way here, you must have questions. If I can guess, you must be wondering why a princess of Asghar is here in South Neva. Taking refuge? Trying to run away from something? From the power struggle of my siblings?" She pointed out with her brows raised. "The answer to your question, the question itself is the answer," she nodded and revealed that Rasmus's suspicion was correct.

Rasmus was mildly surprised that there was someone who would reveal everything without a single worry, especially to him, someone with a dangerous mind. If she knew who he was, that meant she was planning or at least expected him to see her in person after he found out about her and her background.

"You play the same game as mine," Rasmus smiled as he grabbed his cup of tea. "You're only telling half the truth, Princess. I respect that," he said and took a sip of his tea.

"If I have to play a game, I should play with the same rule against my opponent, wouldn't that be fair, Count Blackheart?" Anastasha smiled and chuckled gracefully with that confident and yet not arrogant smile.

"I have put myself on the chessboard, why don't you try and unveil my intention here in this place? It can be a stalemate or a checkmate, so let's play the game," Anastasha smiled gently as she put down the cup and sat gracefully.

Rasmus smirked as he leaned back and stared into Anastasha's eyes. He rubbed his bottom lip with his finger as he tried to decipher her intention from that half-truth that she had revealed earlier.

"(She took refuge here because of the power struggle among her siblings. She might be someone who tried to get away from it either because she's powerful enough to be a perfect pawn or the other way around where she's powerful enough to threaten her siblings)" Rasmus thought as he looked at the table that was filled with snacks and watch Aris tasted random cookies that she found interesting.

"(Or perhaps she's taking refuge to make her siblings believe that those two possibilities are the things that she's concerned about. She's the only daughter which means she's either treasured by the king and queen or maybe it's a simple matter like she's running away to avoid forced marriage...) he sighed as he sat straight and looked at Anastasha in the eye again, realizing how excited she was.

"You're throwing balls at me, thinking that one of those balls is the right answer when the truth is the right ball is still in your hands, hiding it behind your back," Rasmus narrowed his eyes and stared into Anastasha's eyes.

Anastasha chuckled as she looked down to grab a macaron and took a small bite of it.

"And here I thought you would waste your time more guessing," she said with a smile on her face.

"You're saying to play a game of chess when the truth is the king is never on the chessboard. You're quite a sly one," Rasmus said as he leaned back and crossed his arms. "You're here to become a refuge, but you're not actually trying to run away or hide. You're waiting for an opening or an opportunity for something."

"Yes, but I believe you would respect my privacy in that matter?" Anastasha raised her brows.

"Of course, but if I asked anything around it, you wouldn't mind revealing it, don't you?" Rasmus asked.

"I don't mind at all as long as you don't try to expose me that is," Anastasha answered without hesitation and nodded.