

THE KIND OF EVIL

Chapter 10 A visit.

"Abigail," Rasmus called as he walked toward Abigail who was busy teaching the new children about magic.

Abigail turned around and immediately bowed her head, and so did the other children. It had become a new habit for the children in the village to respect Rasmus. They knew that Rasmus was a Count, a noble and they had to show respect as commoners.

"How's your progress?" Rasmus asked as he went down to his knee.

Abigail closed her eyes, taking a deep breath as she tried to absorb Mana. She imagined a sphere of Mana moving around in between her hands, creating friction until it created a spark and fed the spark with oxygen.

"You created a fire in less than a second, good job," Rasmus smiled and patted Abigail's head. "But the real test starts now," he said as he touched the flame with his finger.

The flame lost its energy and was extinguished immediately. Abigail looked so disappointed as she sighed and looked down.

"You still can't maintain the flame it seems..." Rasmus muttered as he rubbed his chin. "It's okay. Mages are required to have imaginative thinking, and all you need to do is learn about fire," he added as he looked at Abigail.

"I did, but I couldn't understand any of it..." Abigail said, her voice was quiet and Rasmus could barely hear it.

Rasmus knew that Abigail had aphantasia, a condition where she couldn't or had a hard time creating an image in her mind. Compared to Cinder and Sinclair who already mastered their own elemental aptitude.

"That's not a problem at all," Rasmus smiled as he patted Abigail's head again. "If one door is closed, more doors are open for you."

Abigail tilted her head with a confused look written on her face as she looked at Rasmus. She then watched Rasmus open his left palm and create a spherical ball of fire. She watched as the ball of flame became smaller and smaller, yet she felt the heat begin to hit her skin.

"Do you feel that?" Rasmus raised his brows and looked at the ball of fire that was as big as a marble. "If you can't imagine it, you can feel it. The hotter the fire, the stronger it gets. Although this is smaller, it's denser because you can feel the heat and Mana it consumed," he explained and then dispersed the flame into a thin layer of smoke.

Abigail looked at her hands and began to follow what Rasmus had said. She created a fire and began to wrap the fire with Mana, turning its shape into a spherical one. She could feel the tingling sensation on her palms and she began to pour more Mana into it.

She felt the fire was fighting against her will, but she squeezed the fire until it became smaller. She was smiling widely as she managed to imitate what Rasmus did even though it was imperfect.

"I did it..." She whispered, her voice trembling with a mix of disbelief and excitement. For the first time, the fire felt like hers, and not just an uncontrollable force, but something she commanded.

"Another lesson, Abigail..." Rasmus grasped the ball of fire and extinguished it.

Abigail was shocked when Rasmus forced her to stop. She watched the white smoke flowing and lingering around Rasmus's hand.

"You need to know your limit," Rasmus said in a gentle voice. "You may force it, but don't make it the only way to get better. Just like earlier, if one door is closed, a few will open for you. Find it, and become one-of-a-kind," he explained and patted Abigail's head.

"Okay..." Abigail's eyes lit up as she said it energetically.

Rasmus got up and checked the other children's progress.

When the sun went down and all the children went home, Rasmus went to check out the bookstore. Henry was writing a book at his desk with a hot cup of tea beside it when Rasmus entered the bookstore.

"My favorite customer..." Henry said with a soft smile.

"I read the whole book..." Rasmus paused to sit on the chair, across from Henry. "It was confusing at first when the 4 figures waged wars against each other. The power struggle was vivid, but something tells me that they weren't enemies," he continued with his brows furrowed and eyes narrowed.

Henry raised his brows, intrigued by Rasmus's conclusion.

"What made you think that way?" Henry narrowed his eyes and closed the book.

"Let me borrow this for a moment..." Rasmus stood up and walked toward the stack of scrolls and grabbed a map. "You see..." he paused and opened the map of Neva. "I tried to map their strategies and the regions they used as the battlefields..." he muttered and stared at the map on the table.

"You map them? If I remember correctly, they went to war, dozens of times," Henry looked at Rasmus, amazed by his determination.

"184 times in the past 20 years to be exact, at least the big ones," Rasmus answered as he grabbed a pencil. "I'm drawing the patterns for you and I hope you can give me an insight as to why they chose these patterns..." he added and began to draw the patterns, circling the nations and areas that were used for battle.

Henry was speechless when he watched Rasmus draw the patterns of the major battles from each side and each year. He couldn't believe Rasmus remembered every single one of them. It was shocking, and he believed Rasmus because he knew that Rasmus wasn't the kind of person who made things up.

"Yes, I remember those events from the book..." Henry nodded as he began to see the patterns. "There are specific nations and areas that each side used for defense," he pointed out.

"Even though they weren't the most beneficial areas for them to take or defend, they kept taking these places over and over..." Rasmus nodded as he pointed at the areas that he mentioned. "I don't know anything about these areas since their reigns and glory had long gone, replaced by new rulers. But you, you might be able to find out about these places and why they kept focusing on them," he looked at Henry with a serious expression.

"I might have to do my research in the capital city..." Henry answered as he kept staring at the areas Rasmus drew. "Maybe these will give us a new light..." He nodded in agreement.

"Well then, I'll take my leave. It's getting late anyway. Goodnight, Henry," Rasmus said as he took a few steps back and then left the bookstore.

Rasmus left the village and went into the forest where his house was. Since Videl went to the capital city, he was alone in the forest, but then he saw a group of men wearing black leather coats standing in front of his house. When they noticed his presence, they all turned around and they all had cold and menacing gazes.

"Rasmus Blackheart, we have been looking for you," a gray-haired man with a scar on his neck said in a cold and deep voice.

"You know my name. It's a bit unfair if you don't tell me yours and your men..."
Rasmus responded and counted there were 11 people in front of him.

"Well..." the man moved aside and the others followed, opening the space for Rasmus to enter his cabin. "Why don't you let us in and we can talk," he smiled coldly with empty eyes.

Rasmus looked down a bit as he smirked faintly and nodded. He sighed and walked toward the door, passing through the people who kept their menacing and cold gazes at him. He wasn't bothered by their gazes and opened the door.

"Come in," Rasmus smiled coldly at them as he grabbed the wooden sword that he had placed behind the door, hiding it from the mysterious men.