

1411

~~Mia~~

"Galon!"**©Wɪv. (n) o v e L w (o) r m. Ċ r (m)**

Too late. He'd let the string go, and Mia threw up her hands as she clenched her eyes shut.

The batlam rune flared in her mind. The runes lined up, and the chains that connected them lit up like electricity through a filament lightbulb. It was blinding, and it brought the gold glow of the rune crashing down through the maze of her mind like a lightning strike.

It enveloped her. The fingers inside her grabbed the rune and lifted it, a reflex, like someone catching a baseball thrown at their head. Because it had to. Because she had to.

The gold glow turned red, and vanished. Her eyes were still closed, and she sucked in a breath as she waited for the inevitable pain of an angel arrow having already struck her through her guts or something. But it didn't come, and she slowly lowered her hands as she opened her eyes.

She was uninjured. And the angel hadn't fired his arrow. He grinned at her as he lowered his bow, arrow held to the grip by his aiming hand, string beside it. The asshole had unknocked the arrow just before he'd let the string go. She should have seen it coming.

"You... asshole!"

"You really thought I would shoot you? I'm offended."

"You... you!" She swung her staff at him, and he chuckled as he stepped out of range. "I thought you might--"

Wait. She had a staff?

Slowly, she squeezed the grip of the metal staff in her hand, and set her eyes on it and the glowing red stone sitting at its tip. A large ruby as big as her fist, wrapped in the squeezing, sharp spikes of the staff's top. Black, almost finger-like spikes. A black staff. It was shiny, like blackstone that'd been polished, and had several segments where the metal had grooves and spikes coming out of it, with tiny red gems decorating between the metal spikes. Thankfully, all the spikes pointed up and in. Purely decorative. And damn, did they look good.

The giant ruby on the staff's head glowed, and Mia stared down into it. Fire swirled within, amber, hidden inside the almost blood red of the ruby, a swirling vortex of... hellfire? Or lava?

"I'm surprised Yosepha didn't try this tactic with you," Galon said as he paced around Mia, looking her up and down with analyzing eyes. "Mikalim usually resort to physicality when they can't figure out a puzzle."

"Yosepha isn't like that. She's--" Mia gasped, and looked herself up and down. She didn't just have a staff. She had armor. And unlike the bits of meera metal she'd tried on before, this weighed almost nothing. It covered her, from shoulders to toes, all hidden inside layers of beautiful black armor. It wasn't easy to get a look at herself, and she had to twist hard to do it, but thankfully the armor didn't block her movement.

It wasn't as heavy-looking as a mikalim's armor, not as thick, easy to turn. Bits of red silk hung from between the joints, like white did from Galon's, but the similarities ended there. Her breastplate had breasts and a curved stomach. Her shoulders had shoulder pauldrons with big black spikes. There were some flared bits of armor at the waist that struck out and down as curved spikes, too, like some sort of fancy armor skirt over armored legs.

It was sexy armor.

"Um... this... this..."

"Interesting," Galon said, eyebrow raised. "You have a crown."

"Crown!?" She grabbed her head, and winced as she stabbed herself on a spike. A crown, black, with red rubies on it, almost a tiara. Glaring down at her now bleeding finger, she put it back, and did her best to not let the thrill of donning a crown make her heart race.

The angel laughed. "That armor isn't functional at all."

"That's what I was thinking! I can't fight in this. I..." She blinked down at her staff again, and held out in front of her with two arms. It was five feet tall, same as her. "This isn't even a battle staff! It's a wizard's staff!"

"A wizard's staff?"

"Don't lie to me, Galon. You know what a wizard is."**www.nóvEℓwOrM.(c)om**

He laughed again. "I do, but I still want you to explain it, because I am just as much in the dark about this as you are, if not more."

"I..." With a flourish, she slammed the bottom of the staff against the ground. It went clink in a very satisfying manner, impact pulsing up the weapon, and she smiled. "I can cast magic, I guess?" She waved the staff around a few times, enjoying how light it was, and she drilled it into the ground again. "You shall not pass!"

"What?"

"Never mind. Why would the batlam rune give me a wizard's staff? Or armor that isn't exactly combat ideal?" She rotated her shoulders a few times. Not combat effective, but at least all the spikes on it wouldn't stab her if she twisted oddly, the crown aside. It even let her sit down and get back up, the armor skirt spikes lifting to fit the movement. "Look at this." She traced some of the red gems on the black armor, each found in a convenient location for maximum beauty, the biggest one right on her sternum. "I look like an evil wizard, too. Like, an evil wizard ready to ride a dark horse into battle. I... don't know how to feel about this."

"Your potram rune made you look like an evil seductress, too."

"I am not evil!"

The angel put up his hands, and his bow poofed out of existence.

"Don't hurt me!"

She glared at him, marched up to him -- clink clink went her boots on the ground -- and she poked him in the chest armor with her staff's ruby. They waited. Nothing happened.

"I'm not a wizard," she said.

"You can craft auras."

"So can you!"

"Not like you do. You can also use the angel runes."

"So can you..."

"Not like you do."

"Ugh."

"You can read the ancient language, and apparently know many of the runes used by the archangels."

"But I can't use any of them!"

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