

FROM LONDONER TO LORD

2. Acceptance

Soon enough, Gorsazo noticed that Steven was outside the carriage now.

Seeing Gorsazo coming towards him, Kivamus wiped his eyes with the sleeves of his tunic, hoping Gorsazo didn't notice. He took another look at his long-time advisor and mentor in the early morning light. Gorsazo looked to be in his early to mid-forties, perhaps, with a full head of graying hair. He had the build of a scholar and looked to be of a similar height as him.

"You are awake now, my lord."

"I am. But can you please stop calling me 'my lord'?"

"Of course not, my lord! It would be shameful not just for me, but for all my family, who have faithfully served your family for generations now! I can't do

that." He paused for a while, then said, "But may I ask why? You have never asked me not to call you 'my lord' in the past."

"I am not sure I could explain it even if I tried." Steven sighed. "Let's just say that last night was a... revelation, of a sort, for me."

"I know that the past few days must have been very difficult for you, my lord. And, when you kept drinking so much, even though I tried to stop you many times..."

"Wait, wait, I need to..." Steven couldn't stop himself from throwing up everything he had in his stomach, as if hearing about drinking had reminded his body about the excessive drinking that Kivamus had done in this body.

After a while, when he felt like there wasn't anything more to throw up, he slowly walked a few steps away from that place and sat down on the grass nearby, nearly falling on the ground in the process.

"Here, my lord." Gorsazo offered him a water skin that he was carrying.

Steven washed up his face and felt a little better. Damn that drunkard Kivamus! Couldn't the guy have stopped drinking sooner? He took a deep breath of the fresh morning air. "Thank you for the water, Gorsazo."

"My lord is thanking me? That is new," muttered Gorsazo. "While you do seem better, my lord, you also seem... different."

Steven decided that saying anything about Earth would not only be met with disbelief but could also lead to him being labeled insane. And life on a whole new planet, particularly in the medieval era, was going to be hard enough as it is, without him needing to add something like being considered crazy.

"I am indeed feeling much better, Gorsazo. The past week has been very difficult for me to accept and adjust to, and the drinking that I did last night certainly didn't help it. But I also came to a revelation that being miserable about it wouldn't change the situation I'm in. You already know that going to live my whole life in a remote village in a corner of the kingdom was not what I wanted for my life, but if I don't accept it, my life is only going to be even harder. So, I've decided to accept everything that has happened recently, including all my past life as Steven, and from now on, I will try to live my life peacefully in... uh, what's the name of the place we are going to, again?" Steven asked embarrassedly, having forgotten the name of the place after the recent drinking by Kivamus.

"It's Tiranat, my lord. And it's very good to see that you are not going to be repeating last night's drinking. Am I right, my lord?" Gorsazo said with a small smile on his face.

Steven felt as if he might need to empty his stomach's contents again if he kept hearing about alcohol. "Ugh... don't even remind me about it. And no, I'm not going to be repeating that anytime soon. I just regret that you needed to be uprooted from your life in Ulriga too, along with me."

"It's... okay, my lord. My children have grown up now and don't need me as much these days. It would have been a different matter if we had to leave a few years in the past, right after my wife had died." Gorsazo had a faraway look in his eyes. "It is not that I won't miss my home and my children, but it is my duty and also my desire to see to your well-being. Maybe in the future, I will consider going back to Ulriga, but that's after you have adjusted to a new life in Tiranat. It would be shameful for me if I just left you alone now, right after you were uprooted from your home and would need help in adjusting to a completely new place."

"And you don't even know how true the last part is," Steven muttered under his breath.

Steven vaguely remembered from Kivamus's memories that Gorsazo's wife had died soon after her fever didn't go down for many days. It was so

unfortunate that if they had some simple antibiotics or even common medicines like ibuprofen or paracetamol, it might have saved her life. But he realized that life on Earth in the medieval ages was likely just as difficult, and they didn't have modern medicines in that era either. "Thank you Gorsazo, for coming along with me and also for taking care of me all my life," he said earnestly. He knew how valuable the help of someone like Gorsazo would be in adjusting to a new life in such a vastly different place, and era.

Gorsazo waited for a moment, and said, "My lord, seeing you drowning yourself in alcohol day after day broke my heart. I tried so hard to help, to say something that would make you stop, but nothing worked. I confess, the thought of returning home to my family, after accompanying you to Tiranat, did cross my mind. I thought that if listening to my advice won't help you, then maybe the absence of it would make you reconsider." He looked at Kivamus carefully for a moment. "However, now it seems like my concern wasn't really needed since today you seem better than you've been in ages, my lord. I think I haven't seen you this relaxed and calm since the day you found out that you wouldn't inherit the title of duke. So I have to apologize for thinking about leaving you alone, my lord."

Steven realized how difficult it must have been for Gorsazo to see someone he cared for like his own child, trying to drink so much like he wanted to die. From the few memories of Kivamus that Steven had seemingly inherited, he knew that Gorsazo was the person who had put in the most effort in trying to raise him since Kivamus was a child. Although Kivamus himself was not grateful for it, Steven knew how important Gorsazo was in his life. Even if the

patchy memories he had now about this world were of Kivamus, not of Steven himself, he decided to thank Gorsazo anyway.

"Don't worry about it Gorsazo, you don't need to apologize for it. I know I didn't make it easy for you either. I apologize as well, for causing you to worry so much. Trust me, I'm going to live very differently from the past," Steven said with a smile, not intending to repeat the drinking habits of Kivamus anytime soon.

"Thank you, my lord, but you don't need to apologize to me. It is my duty and an honor to serve you," Gorsazo said while bowing to him. "By the way, my lord, earlier when you said you would accept your past life as... Steevenn, you meant Kivamus, not this... Steevenn, right?" Gorsazo asked with a completely normal voice and a calm face.

"Uh, yeah, of course. Haha, I meant my past life as Kivamus. Of course. Hahaha..." Steven tried to laugh it off, only now realizing his earlier mistake. But it seemed to him that somehow, Gorsazo understood more than he was letting on, even if there was no way he could have known about the existence of Earth or London. Having taken care of Kivamus since he was a child, meant that Gorsazo knew the duke's son better than anyone else, and would catch on to such slip-ups easily. He didn't know what the norms were in this country about dealing with people who were seemingly possessed, but it couldn't be pleasant. He had to try not to make such a mistake again.

And it did remind him that he needed to start thinking of himself as Kivamus, not Steven. And until he could find a way to return to Earth, he was going to be living as the newly made baron, Kivamus, the third son of the Duke of Ulriga. Not that it was going to make living in this world any easier, he thought, while he tried to bite some rock-like hardtack biscuits that Gorsazo had offered him.

Soon they went and sat inside the carriage after Gorsazo told the carriage driver that they'd be moving now. This time Gorsazo accompanied Kivamus to the inside of the carriage, instead of sitting in front with the carriage driver like in the past few days.

Although his headache had receded a lot compared to when he had woken up, Kivamus still wasn't feeling completely normal. But he was still glad to be feeling better now. He had kept the flap of the carriage open so he could watch the scenery outside.

The river in the west which the road was following was named Kal River, as he remembered from previous memories of the original Kivamus. It started from the Arakin mountain range further in the south and flowed towards the

northwest direction to end in the Dujtaar Ocean, right where Ulriga was located. There were some sparse grasses and shrubs all around them.

The road they were traveling on was essentially a well-trodden dirt path only. It was probably wrong to even call it an actual road, but in this medieval-like era, this was probably the quality of road that the people of this world had access to. The weather was pleasant enough, but there seemed to be a chill in the air, at least right now in the morning. He could still see the stone walls of Fort Aragosa becoming distant in the north. Although he had vague memories of the country, or rather the kingdom, from the original Kivamus, he wanted to gain more information about the world he would be living in from now on.

"Gorsazo, you know how I've not been in the right state of mind for the past few weeks. And the drinking I've been doing certainly didn't help. But now that I've decided to accept my past, and try to live better, I want to know more about the kingdom."

"I know, my lord. And I'm glad that you have made this decision." Gorsazo continued with a twinkle in his eyes, "And that means you weren't paying attention when I was teaching you about the politics of the kingdom and other topics."

"Haha, yeah, I know," Kivamus said embarrassedly. "At that time, you know I didn't believe that I would really have to leave Ulriga."

"That's... true, my lord. But like you said, let's leave the past behind." He paused for a moment, and asked, "What do you want to know about, my lord? I don't think I can teach you everything that you may have missed in a single conversation."

"No, no, that's not what I meant. I only want to know about some basic things for now. Actually, which season is it right now?" Kivamus asked while rubbing his arms when a gust of cold air suddenly gave him a chill. Being from London, he was accustomed to cold weather, but he hadn't ever liked the winter season on Earth.

"You don't even remember that, my lord? Hmm... your drinking might have taken a bigger toll on your mind than I thought. It's late autumn right now, my lord. Although the northern towns and the capital city would already have seen some snow by now."

"The capital, that's Dorastiz, right?"

"Yeah, it is Dorastiz..." Gorsazo said with an expression that he couldn't believe that Kivamus didn't even clearly remember the name of the kingdom's capital.

"What? You know that my memories are a little jumbled up after the recent drinking..."

"I know, my lord. I'm sorry about it," Gorsazo said with a slight bow of his head.

"By the way, when will we reach Tiranat?" Steven knew the medieval standards of traveling speed would be quite slow, but he didn't know exactly how far they had to travel or how fast they would be traveling.

"Hmm... we will have to stop tonight on the road again, and then by tomorrow evening we should reach Cinran, which we will be passing through on the way to Tiranat. As you might remember, my lord, Tiranat is a barony that falls under the domain of the Count of Cinran. And now, you will be a new baron under the Count. From Cinran, it should be a three-day road journey to Tiranat, based on what I know about this region."

"That's a long time though. Couldn't we have traveled using a boat on the Kal River?" Steven had seen a few boats and even small ships with sails moving

on the Kal River earlier. He wasn't sure about which kind of ships they were, though.

"That's actually difficult to say. His Highness, the Duke of Ulriga ordered you to leave for Tiranat, but it was likely one of your brothers who would have organized your travel to Tiranat. I shouldn't speak ill of my betters, but perhaps... they wanted you to endure the journey in a carriage which would be much more uncomfortable and slower than a journey through a boat."

"They are hardly anybody's betters if they still resort to such petty tricks even though they are older than me," Kivamus muttered.

"Perhaps, my lord."

"Well, where will we stay in Cinran? We didn't rent a room in an inn even in the previous village we passed."

"I should apologize for that, my lord. That was actually my own decision, made after seeing that you were not going to stop drinking. You were not in a sober condition by the evening and I decided that the public shouldn't see you in that condition. I thought one more night's discomfort by sleeping in the carriage was better than a lifetime of jokes about a son of the duke who couldn't control his drinking."

"Yeah... perhaps it was for the better." Steven couldn't help but blame the original Kivamus once more inside his mind, for losing himself inside a bottle.

"As for Cinran, my lord, we can rent a room in a good inn for you there, but it will cost more coins, and your finances are not good enough now for you to keep splurging, my lord. Normally, the Count of Cinran should give you a room in his manor for you to stay, but I doubt he will. Perhaps he still would give a room if you ask for it, but I believe it won't be a room fit for nobles so that he can indirectly insult the duke in front of his court members."

Gorsazo looked at Kivamus and continued, "I advise you not to do that, my lord. I think it's not a good idea to show weakness to others in the court of the count, since from now on, even while living in Tiranat, you will have dealings with them instead of the court of the Duke, in Ulriga, and them taking you lightly isn't going to help you in the future, my lord."

"But why does the count seem to be against me already? I don't think I've ever met him before at all." Steven wasn't completely sure about this, since Kivamus's memories and his own memories were still muddled together, but knowing that Kivamus seemingly wasn't very interested in politics, it was a reasonable guess for him to make.