

303 Red Sky [1]

After a week of being gone, Lucas could now return to his inn room. He was walking down a street when he could still see the protest going on. This caused him to raise his eyebrow. **1**

'I wonder how I will be able to see the side of the citizens. What I can only notice is that they follow the government. But still, why are there protests? Does that mean they can obey the government, but they still have some complaints to do? Well, I had already placed my bet, and later on, I could talk with the 11 Elders.'

Lucas sighed, thinking that rest could be the only thing he should do. However, the thought still lingered in his mind. Even though he could just ignore it, he was curious about the citizens' side since he hadn't encountered a solid one that could change his view of the Southern Continent. It was impossible to have such an organized government, and even so, it was impossible that in an organized government, there wasn't one solid idea.

Due to this blockage of ideas in his head, he decided to talk to other people. He had to know why they were protesting and what their cause was. Their insights were important, and their beliefs about their goal should be clear by now.

He just ignored it before since they seemed ignorant of their cause, but now, just when the expedition ended, Lucas noticed that they protested to stop the expedition since it would cause death, and surprisingly, everyone died.

'Even if I was there, they would still die since I wouldn't interfere with them. I only wanted to create the path of suspicion to be in question, and also be in front of people close to the 11 Elders. But now, I can remember that they wanted to stop the expedition since it will cause another death... So, how did they know that? How did they know that there would be death?'

Hence, as that confusion arose in his head, he talked to plenty of people until he could devise a simple idea from those crowded answers. And then, with a few turns of the answers, he built a simpler thought.

'A person who they call the Scholar knows something. Hence, because of everything he knew happened, these people became his believers, which eventually brought them here to stop what was supposed to happen. Is he a prophet? What does this mean?'

And, just as the mystery began to be revealed, but with no clear answer, he approached the activist group's leader, even if it meant staying up until the next morning. This curiosity couldn't be easily removed from his head.

When he finally found the leader, he paused. 'She seemed nothing unordinarily. Is she the Scholar?' Lucas thought and asked inwardly as he looked at a young lady, guiding and assisting the protesters with a smile on her face.

Lucas then approached her with a humble and respectful approach.

"Are you the leader of this activist group?"

"Why do you believe in him?"

Inside a room that was lent to them by one of the protesters, Lucas sat in front of the young lady leader of the activist group. She had this calm yet serious facial expression that Lucas couldn't be calm about. It was as if she was a reflection of his determination. Even though it was useless, he still couldn't ignore this feeling.

'She looked innocent with those serious eyes...'

"Because of our purpose: to reduce death on our continent and prepare for war." The leader said with a resolute tone, making Lucas pause to think.

'I didn't expect this. They know about the war? Then, they should be aware that the Northern Continent almost had them. After the Western Continent, they would go to the Southern

Continent. Although the swamp covered the whole continent, it wasn't enough to protect them. So, if they were really aware of the war, why do they look carefree?' Lucas thought.

There was a reason behind it, but Lucas just couldn't see the answer as he wanted to slowly answer each of his questions. While the leader was accommodating, Lucas was reflecting on the stupidity they had committed. Surely, even if they believed the Scholar, they should know everything they were believing.

"So you know about the war? But, why do you need to lessen the death? It is an expedition. Death can happen if people involved are stupid."

An expedition is surely dangerous. Even though it was a journey with the utmost importance of safety, this group of people should still achieve the particular purpose they had. It wasn't only for exploration; it was also to discover things that could help them with the problem they had. Furthermore, an expedition should not be limited by those who were not even significant or part of it.

Lucas could see that their opinion was being held dearly. They were conceited about it.

"If for another expedition, we will probably support the 11 Elders, but an expedition for the red sky? That is something they should leave

behind."

"Ah... Why is your belief in him so strong? Are you a cult or something?"

"They think that their opinion matters, even if they don't, as they are just like others, citizens of the Southern Continent."

Lucas sighed, then waited for the answer with his resting face. Resting could show a person's interest in the topic of the conversation, but at how absurd the conversation had become, he couldn't help but have his face stoic and static.

"It is not just simply believing him; he is the light and also the answer to our worries. He could just get the answer we needed, and because of him being wise, we could still continue to protest." The leader spoke in a preacher-like tone, sharing the thoughts of the person she worshiped.

"Protests... Then, what is your purpose really? To prepare for the war? Why don't you protest to make people involved in the war and let them know what to do if the continent falls in danger because of the war?"

If preparing for the war, there were plenty of things to do rather than indulge in something useless like the expedition. Even though they thought that the red sky was harmless, they

should just create something more useful than things like that. They could just let others know about the war and let them know that being careful was useful. Even though they couldn't push them, they could just create other things rather than stop the death of an expedition.

"That... that is impossible. We can't force them to fight when they are dependent on the 11 Elders. That is something we cannot force them to believe because the 11 Elders wanted the people to believe that the thousand-year-earned defense was sufficient."

"Then how about you make them believe and contradict 11 Elders' words about your defense?"

"... That is illegal. We cannot indulge our activities in things that are against the government. We will be executed for treason if we do that..."

It was reasonable. An activist being free should be happy with the freedom to share their opinion. However, if they share something that totally disagrees with the government, it could be taken as treason, even though it wasn't.

A government is afraid of rebels even though they could just fight and capture them. The reason was that they could corrupt people's minds, creating doubt in their system. Hence, with the perfect and organized structure of the

system in the Southern Continent, making the people believe in them, they couldn't afford people to rebel against them on a larger scale. What they could only do was watch over them and observe their every move.

"So, one more thing. How can you still continue your protest?"

"That is because of a favor that the Scholar, our founder, did to one of the elders."

"What did he do?"

Lucas paused. Things were starting to get interesting for him. He was piqued, and slowly, he wanted to know more. He was thirsty for things and the reality that the Southern Continent possessed. And even just a little, he wanted to learn from each side before he jumped into taking them under his wing, even though the negotiation still hadn't begun.

Just as Lucas thought that he could just contact and talk with the 11 Elders, he stopped, as he realized that to fully understand what the 11 Elders wanted, he should learn the flaws they had. And to learn that, the citizens' side should be heard; every little difference.

"I don't really know, but he is close with one of the elders, which is why the government was lenient with us protesters. But, it is still useless

since they don't believe us. We just told them that the red sky is harmless and also provided some reasonable claims. But, they still didn't believe us.'

'So that is their reason. However, it wasn't enough since she didn't really know the depth of their goal. She was just scratching the surface of their whole argument, so they couldn't even perform properly.' Lucas sighed, then lowered his head. 'There is only one thing I should do. I should meet their founder.'

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