

The Noble 351

Chapter 351: Today You Will Die By My Hands!

"Haah~, so that's what it was after all. Now, answer me: you've met with her before, haven't you?"

"Y-yes, I got a message yesterday and went to talk to her. Nothing strange happened, although it was awkward, it ended normally, but this morning I got a letter saying that if I didn't bring you here... it would become known."

"If that sounds like something that Ruthless princess would do, tell me how many lies you told her yesterday during your conversation with her."

"Eh? Well, she asked complicated questions and—ah!"

"Yes, it seems you remembered something. Wasn't there something like a warning? I don't know, from someone with platinum white hair..."

I mean, I'm sure I warned all the girls in my harem not to lie to that princess while she was looking them in the eye.

The reason is her blessing. She is blessed by the goddess of justice, a goddess who is not very relevant in our kingdom, but very powerful at the level of Aleoria.

It was a direct blessing she received a few years ago. That's why she was highly regarded, as it's not common in her generation.

It's a blessing that means if you lie to her three times, she will know a great truth about you, and so on.

It was a dangerous blessing. Of course, being a blessing that uses divinity, my protection from lust is working with her, but here comes a slightly strange influence: since it is a blessing given to a human, it would continue to work without being totally affected.

Although I'm not entirely sure yet, most likely even if I lie to her a lot, she wouldn't be able to get anything out of me regarding the legacy; but it's possible that she could get other things out of me, for example, knowing that I am Seraphina, and things like that.

The same goes for the girls: she's only supposed to access personal secrets, but if you interact with her and lie to her enough, she can get truths out of others.

This skill was dangerous for Elena and Aurora, who had blessings from evil gods; it was likely that this would come out quickly.

In Aurora's case, it seems that it came out first, that she was still half-demon. I didn't explain why, as it might raise more questions, but I was serious when I warned her: don't lie to that princess. And apparently, Aurora didn't follow what I said.

"Y-yes, she said that, but..."

"You did it anyway. Well, tell me how many times you did it; depending on your answer, I'll tell you how screwed you are."

"Wait, I... did it... five times."

"Oh, lucky you. Well, you were one more time away from giving her an important secret. Let's see... she probably knows you're part demon, and nothing else... hmmm but, Aurora, since so many people know, why don't we make it common knowledge? That way she can't threaten you."

"Stop fooling around, they'll hang me. I'll be lucky if they don't torture me or something. A demon who lived in the palace gave birth to a half-demon, the king's own daughter; they'll probably make me disappear."

"Huuy, yes, that's true. Well, it was nice to meet you. I hope you follow the advice better in your next life. Someone tells you, 'Don't lie to a certain person, or bad things will happen,' and a few days later, you lie to them... I don't think you're as smart as you want to appear."

"I understand! I'm sorry, it was my mistake, but with her? I've never been good at dealing with her. Ever since we were kids, she has something I can't do anything about, plus she asked questions I couldn't help answering and lied to her".

"Haah~ you should have avoided her gaze, not like that—oh! Yes, as I was saying, but she really is a sharp princess. I've even heard that she has bad breath, although no one dares to say so."

"Hey, what are you talking about? ...that's not what..."

"Yes, you know, they say that even though she's pretty and one of the beauties of the kingdom, she has some very strange fetishes. We could use that to our advantage!"

"Huh... what? She had something like that?"

"Oh, my sweet, beautiful girlfriend! Always so distracted. It's something that's constantly circulating around the academy."

"Huh, what? Suddenly...? I hadn't heard anything about that."

"Yes, you're distracted, but that doesn't detract from your cuteness. Let's see, for example, one of the milder ones: she has secret meetings with the elite members of her faction, which is why so many people want to join her, even with her bad breath."

"That... is... I think something like that must just be rumors? I don't think it would work, for..."

"Wait, that's not all! He says there's a lot of latex and pain involved. She's like a dominatrix, training them all, putting things where only things should come out and stuff. That's why they're all like obedient dogs. She has her leash, and that's how she keeps her faction afloat."

"Really?"

"Gee, I'm surprised you haven't heard about it. You know, it was actually William who told me. He'd heard it somewhere in the palace. Nothing is more reliable than that! He was shocked. He even promised that under no circumstances would he get involved with the princess, even though he knows she's a beauty. He said that even a flat face like yours was better, though he regretted it since you've been dating me. "

"Eh? ... That's... Willian?"

I can see the confusion on Aurora's face; it seems she couldn't connect what he was saying, and perhaps because she finds it hard to believe that Willian would say something like that, and in fact he didn't.

But since it seems inevitable, I have already decided how to deal with that princess. This life I will not be her toy, nor will I be her lapdog.

The fact that she used such an important secret about Aurora to bring me before her made it obvious that she wouldn't leave me alone; that's why I wanted to be an eminence in the shadows.

It's a pity that didn't happen.

My alternate self suffered a lot because of that woman, but I won't be like that. I won't fall for her tricks or let her lead me by the nose.

"Yes, among other things, what is known about her and what William told me is that she is a pervert who likes to spy on other people without their consent and listen to their conversations, because she discovered that magical technology in some ruins and thinks that no one else on this continent will discover it."

"Huh? ... Ah!"

"You're very slow, Aurora. In a few moments, she'll come in there pretending she didn't hear anything. Play along with me, okay!"

"Yes..."

Creak!

"Sorry for the delay, even though I was the one who invited you here."

At that moment, as I thought, a beautiful woman entered the room. Her wavy golden hair was beautiful, she wore a uniform somewhat similar to military attire, and her eyes were a beautiful golden color, like Aurora's, although now she only has one like that.

Since I entered here, I quickly detected several listening spells and such; they weren't very powerful or hidden spells, but they certainly didn't exist on this continent.

At least until she found them in a ruin. I knew about them; they were deactivated, so I didn't pay any attention to them. But they activated, and I started saying all that because I knew she was listening to me!

"More than an invitation, I would say a threat, wouldn't you?"

I didn't even turn in her direction and remained lying on Aurora's lap as I answered her.

Although through my senses I could see her eyebrow twitch at my attitude and words.

Yes, I thought it was an achievement, especially because as far as I knew, she had good control over her expressions.

That was all, and she said nothing more as she walked over and sat down on the couch in front of us. There was a small table between us.

"Honestly, I didn't expect you to know my sister's secret."

"Yeah, I guess you didn't expect her to tell me that you brought me here because you threatened her, since she's half-demon. Too bad, it seems you wanted me to have a good impression of you, maybe of a good sister-in-law."

'Let's see, there's 1, 2, 3, 4... and there's the fifth one, that's a good one, is it her art? Or a skill?'

"...Aurora, I see you have the guts to charm him, I understand how you got where you are. Well, that works just as well."

"M-me? No, I did it... he's like that, come on, say something—"

"Hmm, well, you know, that's not bad. I mean, that way I get rid of all the problems. Yes, princess, it's just as you think, I'm under her charm, she has me at her feet, any negotiations go with her; leave me out of it."

"Cut the nonsense, this is serious."

"Yeah, me too, my agreement doesn't cover that much. I mean, she even knows you're a demon of lust, virgin. If she wants me to intervene, you have to at least squeeze my head with your thighs while wearing a micro bikini. No negotiations!"

"Y-you bastard! You didn't have to mention the virgin thing and... don't think I won't tell Eira about the perversities you want to do."

"Oh, you know, a few weeks ago I said the same thing to her, she got mad and we had a fight to the death, but then I got from her along with Selene a double thigh tight and they were wearing a microbikini. Do you think I'm afraid of your threat?"

Damn it, this... stop talking nonsense. This is really serious for me; my life may depend on it... Sister, he's not under my charm, you know how those blessed by Aeloria are.

"Hey, that's a secret."

"It's knowledge that the instructors know; she must know it."

Well, that's true. She's a princess, she has a large network of information and more using that magical technology that many are unaware of.

And although the instructors said they would keep it very confidential because if it were exposed it would put me in danger, I'm sure this princess would already know.

"So you were blessed by Aeloria, excuse my previous misunderstanding."

'Oh, I didn't know that.'

"Ah, you see! she didn't know. You gave crucial information about me to a crazy pervert with a fetish for watching others. Let me tell you that even the thigh lock is no longer enough. At the very least, you also have to sit on my face wearing the micro bikini! No, one of those thongs that are the same in the front and back."

"Ugh... fine, I'll do it."

"Huh?! Really?! I was just joking, but since you accept... ugh!"

I didn't really understand what happened to her all of a sudden and why her hands suddenly went to my neck and why she seemed to be squeezing me in earnest, if she seemed willing to accept.

"Damn it, I'll kill you! Yes, I'll die anyway... I'll take you with me!"

"No, this is domestic violence, ugh. Stop using magic to empower yourself, why do you seem like you really want to kill me?"

"Because that's what's going to happen!"

"Since when did you become a yande-ugh!!!! At least... ugh!... do it with your thighs... your thighs!"

"No! Today you will die by my hands! Damn you!"

Chapter 352: Exchange Of Truths

"Ughhh... okay, calm down, I understand. I'll do it."

I really wasn't very motivated. I didn't want to get involved in meaningless power struggles and wanted to avoid them like the plague.

And contrary to what she believes, his sister knowing he's a demon isn't a big deal.

Anyway, I was acting and saying all this because, in a way, it helps in how to deal with this woman.

"Fine, tell her I don't have you under my control and no more nonsense."

Well, at this point that should already be clear. She's smart and should have noticed this; in fact, it was logical that she jumped to the immediate conclusion that I was controlled by Aurora.

Aurora, in her current appearance, has nothing special about her, apart from her title as a princess, and I am one of the most prominent of my generation.

Not to mention that here, the rejection of demons is high, to the point that, if I knew that fact, it was more logical that I was under her charm than of my own free will... what a pity she was wrong.

'She really has patience.'

I looked at the princess, who said nothing while we did our thing; she didn't say anything even when I insulted her.

'Hey, what's going on here? Ah, oh, so that's what happened.'

'Hey, do you want to switch?'

'No! You take care of it, I'm leaving.'

'Damn it.'

That bastard just came to annoy me. Well, he's busy stalking someone; depending on whether he's lucky, I'll be able to get a new skill again, and see why Lily hasn't arrived.

"Well, in other words, sister-in-law: since you heard her charm, it wouldn't work on me. Since you don't know, I'll tell you that my blessing prevents any mental interference; the charm of a half-demon virgin with a simple face wouldn't work? Ugh! But yes, I started defending you."

"I'll kill you anyway! The world is better off without you!"

"I demand to die between your thighs, not at your hands. At least give me a dignified death!"

"You're not really going to act serious. Do you really want to see me die? She... she has my secret. What happens if your attitude angers her?"

"Nothing."

"Huh?"

"Nothing will happen. She must be really pissed off right now, even though she's looking at us and smiling calmly. Don't you think that's scary? Look: even as I say this, her face is still smiling. I think she's killed a few people with that same smile. Later, I will tell William how disturbing this princess is".

"I see that you're not a simple person, and you understand why I called you; and you can stop your provocations, it makes no sense, although I guess I have to change my opinion of you."

"No, I am; in fact, I'm very easy. Look, Aurora convinced me with just her thighs. Or am I that fickle? And since when did I provoke you? Did I say something I shouldn't have?"

"Wait, you really shouldn't—"

"You know, it's true that you lack wit when you're with your sister. Look, even if she knows you're a demon, she can't do anything about it."

"No?"

"Come on, use your brain. You're worried that once she exposes you, you'll be persecuted or executed, but neither Seraphina nor I will allow that. In the worst case scenario, you'll live with Ciel and Rosy, and well, we can also make Aurora disappear—I miss Auran; he was a good guy."

Yes, Aurora wasn't really in any great danger. If she were, I would have taken this seriously.

In this kingdom, no one can stop me from hiding her. I've already been smuggling two demons for months.

"Ah! Oh! Aha!, I see!"

I don't care if she hears that I can hide Aurora. I say this so that she will understand that this threat won't work any more and leave her alone.

"Second, that crazy lover of domination wants to connect with William no matter what. She must have done her research on him; she must understand even what he likes for breakfast and what time he goes to the bathroom. Anyway, she must know that even if she reveals that you're a demon, there's a chance he'll defend you, since you're his friend. But the important thing for her is that she could earn his hatred or resentment, for telling on you.

"...Ah! That's why... it's William, ah, I understand now."

"Yes, it seems your brain is finally working. Well, and lastly: there's your beloved Oni-chan, Maximilian, her competition, and someone who clearly has a preference for one of his sisters over the rest. The fact that you're a demon won't change his mind. Oh, but princess, don't be discouraged; he loves you too, even though you probably want to kill him. Huehue."

"..."

If that was my way of dealing with that annoying princess, now that she forced me to interact with her, I'll be the last thing she likes... She was obsessed with control and had her ambitions, and she would use everything at her disposal to achieve them.

Once she saw something vulnerable that she could use, she would just keep digging and digging for more, so that she could use people and bring them under her control.

I actually think she has an aversion to demons, but even so, she decided to keep Aurora's secret to herself and use it to her advantage. That's the kind of person she is.

So I'm not going to give her the slightest chance to do anything to me or the girls.

And since she's obsessed with control, she keeps at a distance anything she can't handle and that gets in her way, and I want to be that kind of existence for her.

I want her to be as wary of me as possible, to see me as an incomprehensible being she can't handle, and to think it's better not to get involved.

That's why I talk as if I know everything and make it seem like she's the one in the palm of my hand.

That way she'll avoid me, and I won't get involved in any way with her devious plans, although I don't think I'll get away completely, since I'm close to William.

She probably brought me in to create some kind of connection or something, but I've done nothing but piss her off since she met me.

She definitely seems to be keeping her cool, but she's out of her comfort zone, but since she's also thorough, she wants to see if she really can't use me.

Even if she doesn't believe my act, she'll just send her minions. One thing I'm already prepared for: since I couldn't be the eminence of the shadows, I really think I can deal with all of them, even if they come in a group.

I can even deal with her, who must be in the late eighth or early ninth metamorphosis. Being talented, she can fight above her rank.

But even so, if I give it my all, even if I don't win, I won't lose, and she would never get involved in a fight she doesn't think she can win or that won't benefit her.

So I'm not afraid of any repercussions either.

'Hmm, but I have to make it clear to her that fighting me is nothing but a loss and she won't gain anything... hmm, I guess I have to do it to be sure.'

"And uff, I see the light. Finally. So, princess, is there anything you want to tell me or ask me? I'm open to discussion."

I took off the blindfold, separated myself from Aurora's soft thighs even though I didn't want to, and looked her in the eyes, as if to make it clear to her that I even knew about her ability, the one that at this moment she had only told her closest subordinates about, what it was for.

Tacitly telling her that everything was under my control...

But even so,

"Earlier, what you said about William and the rumors... is it true?"

'As I thought, it won't be so easy; she's also very tenacious.'

She wasn't so easy to intimidate and didn't back down, even though I tacitly said that I knew one of her big secrets, she didn't hesitate for more than a fraction of a second.

Although I think it's more because she was dying to know how much of what I said was true.

"So you're going to start with William; I guess that's your priority. Well, I was just kidding. Although I did hear some things about you, I'll tell you that they weren't good, and they could reach William."

'...yes, she's a bitch who uses others as objects and stuff.'

'Oh! Tell me more.'

the fact that it is my parallel thoughts that are causing these rumours to circulate among them does not change the fact that I am hearing it.

Technically, they're rumours, and my parallel thoughts are gossipy. If they tell William, it's not my problem.

'Fine, but don't say I told you. But once she... oh!, wait, I see the target. Okay, all or nothing.'

'Okay, go get that trap skill.'

These guys aren't focused on anything, but it's true that I want to get that skill, even if I put aside the earth affinity I was going to take from Alexander. He was lucky that the academy ended early.

"...Tell me, you—"

"Hey, calm down! Since we're doing this, why don't we do it one at a time: now you answer mine and so on."

"Fair... enough..."

"What colour is your underwear? No lies; I'll know too if you do".

"...White."

"Hey, you lied to me. Even though I told you I could tell if you were lying... so meticulous. Now, as compensation, you'll also have to tell me a guilty pleasure or we won't continue."

"...red..."

"(◕o◕) I didn't expect that, what a daring color! And your guilty pleasures?"

"...feet."

"(◕o◕)Oh! That's even more unexpected. Aurora, write that down; later you can tell me if I have pretty feet."

"Huh? Why?"

"Well, if I do, I have to do something to stop them from being that way, lest my feet attract she ."

"Enough! I already answered. Now tell me, is it true that you are blessed by Aeloria? What does your blessing do?"

"That's two questions, but anyway, the answer is yes. And I didn't lie to you, I have a blessing that makes me mentally immune to everything, so the charm of my lust demon girlfriend, flat and virgin, won't work!"

"Hey, stop saying that every time, you're really going to make me angry!"

"Well, we could remove some of the adjectives. Oh, and I don't mean 'flat' or 'demon of lust.'"

"Grrr... you'll pay for this later. I'll ask Elena to lend me 'George'."

"\ (° □ °) / let's handle this diplomatically, no need to get excited, we are rational beings and we can talk about it. Look, you out of danger now; like I said, I did what you asked. No, rather, don't I deserve something like increasing your favorability for getting you out of a bad situation?"

"I would have done it if it weren't for your mouth ruining everything."

"Hey, well, I know deep down you're moved by my masculinity. Well, princess, sorry to keep you waiting, although you're probably listening, let's see if you can get something good out of our conversation. Okay, my next question is... princess, are you a virgin?"

I didn't really have anything serious to ask her, but asking random questions will leave her baffled and probably thinking that there must be something deeper, when really I'm just saying the first thing that comes to mind.

To her, someone who acts and knows as much as I do wouldn't ask meaningless questions.

Chapter 353: I Not Playing Around

"Yes."

"Oh... I guess you're one of those who saves it for marriage. Well, I guess those rumors were false. Wait! That answer also makes them count... you know, the other hole, right?"

"It's my turn to ask."

"Okay, but you'll answer that next, and tell me, when I say 'virgin,' do you count inanimate objects, like a scale model of William with a cucumber tied to it, or would it be eggplants? Or something bigger? Who would have thought! Although you might be disappointed to know that according to One-san, William's isn't—"

"If you gave William an order, he would follow it, right?"

Oops, that was a good question... bah. I took off the blindfold knowing that, so I didn't mind answering. I understood the limits of her ability; not because of her.

In fact, she herself dies mysteriously a few years later, but my alternate self met someone else who had a higher blessing from the goddess of justice that included this function, and as long as it wasn't a lie, anything went.

"Come on, orders don't exist between friends; at most they would be requests. He can make them to me too. Well, it's not like someone who sees everyone as dogs would understand. But hey, that's friendship."

"...I understand."

Yes, I mustn't forget to insult her. I must disgust her so much that she really doesn't want to talk to me again. Seeing her eyebrow twitch is really fun; she must be pretty pissed off.

My alternate self never broke her fake business smile, but with my lustful eyes I can see those details clearly even though she does her best not to break her facade.

"Well, then, for your a—"

"I haven't done it and I haven't used anything that compromises my purity... including the other trade or anything else."

"Oh! That was boring... I was hoping to get something juicy out of this. You're more of a virgin than Aurora, but that doesn't change the fact that you're deranged and like to spy on people."

"Answer me, you are a threat to this kingdom, are you conspiring with demons?"

"Oh! I thought you wouldn't ask, since I'm blessed by Aeloria. You know, people here tend to trust things like that, you're weird, anyway, the answer is no! Rather, this kingdom owes me a few ass saves."

"...I understand. I don't know what you did, but I thank you on behalf of the kingdom."

I'm not saying anything specific, but the fact that I'm telling the truth must be shocking. I mean, even though I still feel like it's because I'm close to William, I got involved with those demons and screwed them over in many ways, more than once helping this kingdom.

I even gave them the magical technology to counter the demons' spatial magic.

And the fact that I've done things at that level, I hope, will establish me in his mind as someone increasingly prominent, someone difficult to deal with... although I don't see the point of his gratitude.

'Hmm, what should I ask him? Oh, since we're here, let's satisfy that curiosity.'

"Tell me, do you like blonde hair and blue eyes? Oh, if not, tell me what you do like. It's only fair that I ask double questions too."

In my memories, when she was after William, she said more than once that that was her favorite combination; I'm curious if it was true.

"No, I hate blonde hair... I like black hair and blue eyes."

"w(° Д °)w! She's not lying. Aurora, she's not lying; hug me, I'm scared."

"Dark hair? I didn't expect that. Hey, get away from me, you're... really shaking!?"

Of course I was shaking. I didn't expect the combination of my hair and eyes to be to her liking; I'm really worried.

Not that I'm taking advantage of this so that my hand is about to accidentally reach out and grab his ass, which I reiterate would be an 'accident'.

"Ouch!"

"Don't get smart, keep your hands to yourself."

"It was an accident."

'At least I tried.'

It was shocking and unexpected, considering she specifically said she hates blonde hair, being blonde herself. But I know she's not guided by her taste or superficial things, so I'm safe.

"What's your reason for provoking me? It's not just because of Aurora, is it? Are you really not afraid of the repercussions? One word from me and you'd live in hell in that place, even with the Silvercrests backing you up."

'yes, what I've been waiting for!'

"Nah! You couldn't do anything to me. Oh, and it's not because I believe in the Silvercrests; I believe in myself, and I assure you that if you do, you'll pay dearly. It would be more lucrative to fight to the death with Maximilian's faction."

"You're not really lying... What you say about Aurora is true, with Maximilian it would be very disadvantageous to betray her. But even so, it doesn't change the fact that this is under my influence. What about your other girlfriends? Don't you think I won't be able to—"

"Stop right there or you'll really make me angry, and I mean it!"

It's over. I knew what she was about to say. She said the same thing to my alternate self, who didn't want to cooperate with her at first...

Hearing that brought back bad memories, how she used Elena. She found out that Elena had a blessing from the god of darkness and used it to manipulate me as she pleased, moving me like her puppet.

I knew she could use that to threaten me, to find out more about me, to find a weakness.

She was thorough, and I knew that, that she started using amenazas should not be a surprise, but still, when I heard her, I was very angry.

"What's going on? You've been provoking me all this time, and I can't—"

"I said stop!"

An intense and heavy murderous intent came out of me.

I haven't really had a chance to use it, but it's something that forms after killing many living beings, and in fact, I was already forming mine.

But now it's not just mine: I have my alternate self's embedded in my intent, and that's not a simple thing.

Killing intent is not a skill; it's more of a state of mind: it's having the conscious certainty that I can kill someone.

A certainty so great, so clear, and so strong that it even escapes I body, giving an instinctive warning to others that I have the determination, intention, and certainty to kill them—that I not playing around.

The more I kill, the more experience I gain, and therefore the more certain you are that you can do it to the rest, and the feeling becomes thick and prominent.

My alternate self gave me his certainty, that mindset—of being able to kill anything that stood in my way—when I passed the sixth metamorphosis.

At that moment, a feeling of heaviness invaded the room; Aurora beside me seemed to freeze while the princess in front of me opened her eyes in surprise.

She is stronger; she shouldn't be suppressed, but she must have been surprised that such a heavy and sharp intention materialized.

I jumped over the table and stood in front of her.

'Tsk, they didn't come out. Well, it doesn't matter.'

"Listen and listen well, princess. I don't give a damn about your power games. You can go fuck William and be the queen of this shitty kingdom for all I care."

"..."

"But I'll tell you one thing: the moment you involve one of the girls, including Aurora, in your garbage, you can bet that game is over."

"..."

"If you're so eager, I'll hasten your death, so you better not get too smart... Tell me, do you see any lies in anything I said?"

"...No, I understand. I'll make sure not to involve you or your loved ones."

"Tsk... This is really annoying. Okay, Aurora, let's go."

In the end, I ended up making a direct threat, and I wasn't really lying. I didn't want to get caught up in this nonsense; if the girls got involved—as happened with Elena in my previous life—I would really go all out and kill her.

In that situation, I would make sure to win at any cost, even if I lost a few limbs or more in the process.

'Ufff! In the end, I was the one who got worked up. I really can't handle her; even until the end, she kept up the facade of calm.'

But when I think about it, even though it was a direct and aggressive threat in the end, it was in line with what I wanted: to seriously warn her that it's better not to get involved in my business.

I wouldn't interfere with her, and she wouldn't interfere with me; that way, everything would be simpler.

'Haah~ Anyway, I guess this question and answer thing is over... ah! I should have asked her if she was willing to accept the harem.'

I mean—for William... I said I didn't care if she fucked William, until I remembered that I did care, since Silvia was there.

With her timid nature, she stands to lose everything with this princess, so it would be good to come to an agreement on that.

I don't think it counts as a lie, since I believe it to be true at the moment I say it.

And even if it were, it's only one, and I suppose this will be one of our last interactions, at least in private.

So, without further ado, I went out with Aurora.

' Hmm, I think I can still negotiate that thigh squeeze; if I take out the micro bikini part, I think it will be more reasonable. Huehue...'

Chapter 354: "Join The Right People And You'll Go Far In Life"

POV: Third person

"You may come out now."

In the room where Chris had recently left, Princess Celestine, without moving from her place, said those words to no one in particular.

""At your service, Princess.""

But, in fact, five shadows quickly appeared at her side, all kneeling and awaiting her orders.

Tap! tap tap!

She did not look at them; she continued to stare into space, lost in thought, while her fingers tapped on the table. It was only after a brief but uncomfortable silence that she stopped her fingers and gave her orders:

"Deactivate all listening spells and see if there are any new ones. Be thorough. Once you've done that, you can leave. I need time to think."

"At your command, princess." (x4)

"..."

But only when four of the five had answered and started moving did the fifth one—the one at the front—remain kneeling, saying nothing.

"What's going on? If you have something to say, say it."

"Princess, why did you allow so many disrespectful acts and let him act so arrogantly?"

"...Bastian, you are one of my most loyal followers, and I understand your complaints, but it's not that simple. His carefree and crude behavior isn't everything... Tell me, even though I ordered you to stay hidden until I told you otherwise, why did you almost reveal yourself when he approached me?"

Tap tap tap!

There was no complaint in her tone, no reproach, it was as if she were simply describing what had happened.

Bastian knew that his princess rarely spoke of unnecessary things like this, so he thought about his words for a moment and in the end simply answered with the truth.

"I couldn't stand it, princess. He kept talking nonsense and even threatened you. Forgive my limited understanding, but I don't understand why he stopped us. We would have put him in his place, now that it was just him and the 'princess Aurora'."

"That's a very simple way of thinking. He immediately noticed that you came with me and knew where you were; although he acted relaxed the whole time, he was always alert."

"He noticed us? That's impossible, we are the best at stealth."

"He did. The moment you intended to move, he cast three high-level spells in an instant. One was to defend Aurora, and the other two were powerful enough to stop anything you tried in its tracks."

"..."

Tap! tap tap.

"And he was preparing to cast even stronger spells, with effects and elements I don't understand, but he undid them the moment I ordered you to back off. You didn't notice because it was unrealistically fast and stealthy, and affinities aren't enough to do something like that."

"..."

"Not only that: he wasn't talking nonsense—he knows too much—he already knew we were listening to him, and everything he told me at that moment is true. I don't know what backs him up, but it's true that he's not lying."

Tap tap tap!

"...But he could be a madman who thinks he has more power than he actually does. You yourself said that your blessing doesn't work on that kind of person."

"Yes, but this isn't that case. His judgment, preparation, and actions are not those of a novice. He took the entire environment into account, not to mention his murderous intent. That's not something that kind of person has."

"..."

"And even though he was several ranks below me, I sensed danger, a threat even greater than Raphael or Maximilian, or anyone else I would have come up against. If you had come out, he probably would have seriously injured or even killed you to prove his point."

"..."

Tap tap Tap!

"Don't send anyone after him. Don't interfere with him or those around him, except for... no, no exceptions. Quietly warn the faction members, and if they still do, cut all ties with them, no matter who they are."

"Princess, going to such extremes is—"

"—absolutely necessary.... I saw it in his eyes; to him, all this seems like meaningless nonsense, a child's game. He looked at me as if I were a fool craving a little power."

Tap tap tap

"Princess, you don't have to pay attention to him, he's just a simp—"

"I don't need your consolation, he's not simple in any sense... his gaze... his gaze wasn't one of contempt; he just seemed to have a broader vision, beyond this continent, even more... haah~"

"..."

"Do you know me well? Have I ever talked this much? Do you know why I'm explaining all this to you even though it's unnecessary?"

"...No."

Tap!, tap!, tap.

"Because I really don't know what to do; it's the first time in my life I've felt this way. his gaze, that feeling, made me feel insignificant, like everything I did was meaningless. It was like a reality check that made me feel like I had been in a bubble all this time, seeing only what was inside it."

"Princess, what you do is not insignificant. You will be the future queen and bring unprecedented prosperity to our kingdom; you could even unify the continent, making history. That is an ambition worthy of respect and my loyalty to you."

"...Yes. That is exactly what it is, my ambition. When did it become the only thing I could see? It is true that there is no one more qualified than me to rule this kingdom... but at what point did that thought become my bubble?"

"Princess, what do you mean by that?"

Tap!, tap!, tap!.

"You know, Bastian, there is a saying that has been passed down in my family and with which we are raised from childhood: 'Join the right people and you will go far in life.' That is why I always emphasized gathering talented and capable people; I thought that was the true power above wealth, lineage, or other things, and I was not wrong."

"That's true; that's why our faction is superior to the other t-."

"But now I think that's not exactly what that saying meant. We were also taught a little about cause and effect and balance in actions... in short, about karma. When I think about it, I've been arrogant."

"Princess, you're not. You're the last person who should think that way."

Bastian didn't understand what the princess meant. Of all the people he knew, he thought she was the most down-to-earth.

She herself had taught him that pride without backing is simply arrogance, and someone who is arrogant is simply a fool who will die soon.

In his mind, his princess would never be that kind of person.

Tap, tap, tap.

"Not exactly. You said it yourself: that I would be the future queen and that I would bring prosperity and history, right?"

"...Y-yes."

"yes, I will make history on this continent, and only on this continent... I think I understand. In fact, my interpretation of that saying was wrong; on the contrary, that same saying means and warns that if I associate with the wrong people, I won't get very far and I'll be limited."

Tap, tap, tap.

"...Princess?"

Bastian didn't know why, but he had a very bad feeling. It felt as if the strong, steady pillar he had relied on his whole life was shaking and crumbling—and the tapping of her fingers on the table offered no comfort at all

"What a horrible feeling, to realize something so obvious and silly so late and in this way. Haah... that's why the wisdom of the ancestors should never be despised. Tell me, Bastian, how far do you think an arrow with me as the tip would fly?"

"V-very far, Princess."

Bastian was beginning to feel suffocating pressure, and it wasn't because the princess was unleashing her murderous intent or doing anything; he simply felt like he couldn't breathe.

For some reason, he found it difficult to answer his princess's questions. He felt that they weren't so simple; he even felt that they were more for her than for him.

There was definitely something much bigger at stake. He felt that if he answered wrong, everything would fall apart.

Tap, Tap!, Tap!

But he didn't know the right answer either; that increased his feeling of pressure and suffocation, and each tap seemed like a countdown to something very bad.

"How much?"

"I-I don't know, princess."

Tap!, Tap!, Tap!

"Curious. A few moments ago, you gave me a clear answer. Why don't you say it again? No—saying it is unnecessary—I already know the answer, now I understand how this works."

"..."

Bastían felt like he couldn't breathe; no words came out of his mouth, and the feeling that he was falling into an abyss was very clear.

He still didn't really understand what all this was about or his princess's words, but every part of his body felt a great sense of regret... about what? He didn't know.

Tap!, Tap—

And, as if the countdown had come to an end, the princess stopped tapping her fingers on the table.

"Yes, you've checked everything; you may leave. Further discussion is useless. Remember and follow all the orders I gave you clearly, without exception, including you."

"Y-yes, princess."

Bastian felt that the bright and golden future he thought he would have alongside the princess now seemed dark and very distant for some reason.

Until the end, he did not understand what it was about or the thoughts of his princess, and, as if by inertia, he simply left.

"Join the right people and you'll go far in life."

On the other hand, Celestine, who was left alone in the room, repeated the familiar saying and closed her eyes; she seemed to be thinking about many things, which would not make many people happy if they came to fruition.

"Brrr! I feel a chill. Hey, Aurora, you're not cursing me, are you? Or thinking of borrowing 'George' from Elena, right?"

"...Actually, that's exactly what I'm thinking."

"So it was you? How can you, when I helped you clean up the mess you got yourself into?"

Aurora and I were on our way back; the princess base is not far from where the academy is now, but it was also a good time for a little rendezvous, as we saw some stalls along the way and bought some local products.

I thought we were fine until I felt the chill.

"Hmph. You said it yourself: there wouldn't be any trouble to begin with, so technically you didn't do anything. I just remember how you wanted to trick me into wearing a micro bikini and doing all those things."

Hey! What a convenient memory you have... But let's get back to the matter at hand: how willing are you to—"

"I'll definitely ask her!"

"Wait!, the microbikini isn't necessary, just a small key is enough for me. If you put enough force into it, you can even twist my neck and relieve your complaints."

"Really? You want me to do it so badly that you're willing to risk your life?"

"Yes!"

I say with morphogenesis; having my neck twisted is nothing, and to begin with, I don't think she has enough strength to do it even with magical reinforcement. It will just be a more intense squeeze, and that's fine; it's a total win.

"Hmph, I'm still not going to do it."

"Tsk, I have a girlfriend I have to invest so much in and I get nothing in return; nothing but losses. Not to mention that—"

"Say 'flat, normal, and virgin' and I'll kill you!"

"Not to mention that it's getting late and there are chores to do, let's go back—"

"Hmph!, you better... besides, I was planning on giving you something later for accompanying me in this difficult situation."

"A thigh squeeze in a micro bikini?"

"No, you bastard! That's definitely not going to happen."

"Excuse me!"

"?"

At that moment, while I was trying my luck, I heard a voice behind me. It annoyed me because it interrupted just as Aurora was about to give in. (She wasn't.)

"If it's not too much trouble, could you come with me? Mr. Raphael extends an invitation to you."

'Who is that bastard? I knew leaving was a bad idea. Now everyone wants to call me.'

"Ah! Phina's brother."

Oh, she called me Phina... No! Wait! What did she say? Whose brother? Mine? My brother? (⊙o⊙)!Oh, my brother!'

Chapter 355: Raphael Silvercrest

"Then I'll be waiting for a positive response."

"Haha, yes, I'll think positively about it, I have a lot to consider. Well, then, I'll say goodbye."

'Ugh, that was weird.'

I finally freed myself and ended what could be considered my first encounter with my brother.

I remembered that I do indeed have an older brother, six years older than me. Technically, he's my stepbrother, because he's the son of my stepmother Valeria, but that doesn't matter much.

It's our first meeting. You could say it's like fate that we haven't met until now, and that includes my alternate self.

The reason is that, since I was reincarnated, he has been here in the middle world, as he is part of the kingdom's first generation of talents.

Now, it was inevitable that when my alternate self's time at the academy ended, he would meet him, just as I am doing now.

But a few months before graduation, Raphael was involved in an incident that left him almost crippled, and he had to return to the duchy for a recovery that would last years.

I, on the other hand, graduated, came to the middle world, and never returned home. After a few years, the kingdom was destroyed and everyone died. My alternate self never met him until the end.

Two lives so far, and today was our first encounter. That's why it took me a while to connect who he was until Aurora reminded me that he was my brother. For a moment, I had even forgotten his name.

Until a moment ago, he didn't appear in any of my plans or my alternate self's, and I had no thoughts or anything about him.

I realized that I hadn't fully understood the consequences of the academy moving to the middle world.

All I have of him are Seraphina's memories, and honestly, now that I've started to remember all that, I remembered that he's basically a younger version of my father in almost everything... even in the way he treats me.

Although I don't know if that has changed now that we haven't seen each other for so many years.

'I guess I really don't know anything about him.'

That's why I was uncomfortable and didn't really know what to do, but in the end I followed the woman where I met him.

And I confirmed that my father's genes are really dominant, because like me, he had blue eyes, platinum white hair, and was damn handsome.

As I thought, if I had chosen a masculine appearance for Chris's identity from Seraphina, he would have looked too much like him. It was good that I didn't.

I really didn't know how to act in this sudden encounter, so I was polite and listened to everything he said, acting correctly, not wanting to get into a conflict over anything.

Even so, the discomfort and thoughts of what to do never went away, and Aurora following me and looking at me as if I were an alien or something the whole time didn't help.

Curiously, he didn't bring up the subject of my origins, although I think he knows Tristan, and obviously I'm not his son, maybe my father explained it to him in a letter or something.

In the end, all he talked to me about was his faction and my future plans and all the advantages I would have by joining his faction and so on.

He acted nice and calm, explained everything patiently, and in the end, he didn't even demand an answer, he just told me to keep it in mind.

Although there was one final question about my relationship with Seraphina, which gave me a bit of a bad feeling, but I told him the same thing I told my father during the banquet.

Except for that last part, I guess it's the same thing the princess wanted to do when she called me, adding the creation of a contact with William. Only in her case, I was aggressive and didn't let her say any of that.

That's why Aurora may have noticed the difference in treatment and couldn't believe it. But I have to complain: if she thinks she's hallucinating or in a dream, she should pinch herself, not me.

She pinched me five times, then I will demand fair compensation.

Finally, the first contact with my brother ended like that, and before another faction contacted us, I went straight to the academy. I had a lot to think about.

'I guess I can't let it happen again.'

'Yeah, I think it won't be long now... is Willian's luck working!?'

'The beatings, I mean the training — wait, number two, are you back?'

'Yes, I failed. We lost the doppelgänger, I couldn't get to him, there are the memories.'

"Damn... there was someone watching him, they're too cautious, is it because of the demons?"

"Going after a royal butt isn't easy, and I still don't know if the appearance I was using could seduce him."

"Yeah, it won't be easy to get, let's try a few more times and if it doesn't work I'll go myself, but back to our brother..."

'Yes, we owe it to our parents.'

'Not doing it would really make me uncomfortable, and we'll lose their support.'

'That's true, that's right.'

'That's right, that's true.'

I was discussing what to do. In fact, the incident is more or less around this time, and I was thinking about whether or not to get involved in this and the implications that could have.

Technically, he means nothing to me, and I have no interaction with him other than Seraphina's memories, but...

Recalling the events, due to that injury, unlike now, my father did not accompany me, let alone my stepmother.

They both stayed in the duchy, and that caused my alternate self to suffer greatly, having no support, no one, and if the incident were to happen again, they would probably return.

It's not really necessary now, but it's not a bad thing to have. Maybe one day I'll be short of money or something else and I'll just have to go through the portal to ask my father for it, it's convenient, and he the source of the power of my abuse of authority techniques to begin with.

More importantly, I believe I owe this family. It's not that I feel sorry for replacing that bitch Seraphina, who is taking her time being born while William's damn crow has already been born.

But rather because they have done so much for me over the past three years and more. They gave me their love and support, including my mother Valeriane, whom I didn't used to see much.

They were my new family, and I would feel terrible to let that tragedy happen again.

"So the verdict is..."

'Prevent him from becoming crippled.' (x2)

'But that's not easy. Technically, we're still in the academic period.'

'Even if we ask, they won't let us go, so the legal route is out of the question.'

'Only our Seniors can go. It was a collaborative expedition, right? With the other kingdoms.'

'If two other kingdoms also went, they didn't come out of it well either.'

'But we don't really know what happened.'

'Yes, they all came back a very strong binding contract and nobody could break it, although they came back alive...'

'Obviously someone intervened. Could it be the demons?'

'No, they wouldn't leave them alive, unless they had another purpose. But nothing else ever happened.'

'Hmm, but we don't have any information about the objective or the location, right?'

'We don't know much! Since we weren't involved.'

'But first of all, we need to find a way to join that expedition.'

'We need to gather information, we know almost nothing, we have to go to the local informants.'

Quickly, with my parallel thoughts, I decided that I would intervene. Even though I didn't really gain anything, I did it because I wanted to.

And in the end, although some of my brother's faction and the factions of the other kingdoms died, many returned alive like him. So it wasn't a deadly trap where I would definitely die, and I believed that there would be no problem with going.

I don't know how much my intervention will actually help, but at least I will have tried. After all, this is for my family.

I also didn't pay much attention to the changes that all this would bring, even in the power dynamics between the factions I know: going into an unknown future is not a fear I still have.

..

.

"Give me a large Sableon steak, charred black, with a twenty-year-old wine. Make it the best one!"

"...Yes, sir, but about the wine... could you join me? That way you can choose it yourself."

"Of course."

"Oh, this is great!"

To find a way to sneak into the expedition my brother would be leading, I needed information to know exactly when it would be and how to sneak in.

So, following what my alternate self knew, I went to the place where I could find information: something he discovered after years of being in the middle world.

It was a hidden place, in a high-class restaurant. To get to the informant, I had to reserve a VIP room and ask for that even though it wasn't on the menu.

I felt a little immersed in this situation; I even came with a hood, changed my appearance to a tall, mysterious man, and made my hair cover half my face to go with the atmosphere.

The waiter calmly led me down the hallway to the back. We reached the kitchen and walked past the cooks; they didn't look at me and acted as if I didn't exist.

We reached the back, in the cellar where they stored food, he moved some vegetables, and a door in the wall opened.

All of this really excited me, but it also made me feel a kind of regret: if I were the Eminence of Shadows, perhaps I would have a lair like this, which could only be reached by hidden methods such as these.

"Sir, you can go straight down that hallway; the wine you are looking for is there."

"Good, I hope the wine here is of high quality."

"You won't be disappointed, sir."

'Huheuhe... this is really cool! The person who did this is a visionary in this world.'

I was really getting more and more into the atmosphere. I walked firmly and authoritatively, as if I were someone important but in hiding.

I walked down the dark hallway until I finally reached a large room where there was a lamp, and under that lamp was a single, lonely chair.

Without thinking twice, I stepped forward and sat down.

Suddenly, another spotlight lit up in front of me, revealing another seat not far away where someone was sitting.

Only the dark edges it visible. There were two figures standing next to it, also obscured by darkness, and only their outlines were visib—

"噫_噫!"

"Welcome to our establishment. What kind of information are you looking for?"

The outlines of the shadows on either side made me suspicious, but before I could think any further, a deep, thick voice, obviously male, came from the seated person.

But to me, that didn't match the outlines I was seeing, and in fact, when I looked closer...

"噫_噫... yes, about that. I want information about Raphael Silvercrest."

"Oh, you want information about one of the lords of this place? You're not simple. You should know that such information is very expensive. Do you think you can afford the price?"

'Yes, there's definitely something wrong here. Ah!'

I wasn't really going to leave it at that, so I activated my skill, and sure enough, it confirmed my thoughts: the person in front of me was someone I knew.

'Hey, number two, abort; don't waste another doppelgänger. The skill is no longer necessary: I found Lily.'