

## The World 61

### Chapter 61: The Battle At The Black Market, Part 1 (1)

The entire Silver Blade, except for Miss Sarah, stationed as our vigilant guardian at the hideout, converged in the main room. It was our usual hub for strategy sessions and pre-battle preparations.

Our leader, positioned in the heart of the gathering, commenced addressing the members of the Silver Blade, "Norman Amarathea is cooking up another damned kidnapping scheme, this time in the village of Hertan. Curiously enough, the Academy is set to engage in joint training there next week.

"While I'd like to chalk it up to mere coincidence, there's a lurking suspicion that Norman has his sights on someone from the Academy," she divulged. "And this ain't your run-of-the-mill kidnapping spree; it's a carefully orchestrated plan to snatch a specific target.

"The person they're gunning for is the same one Eclipse has been drooling over – an individual outside the royal lineage, yet possessing that precious royal blood. That someone is Charlotte Sierra."

It didn't take much to connect the dots, even for someone like me who rarely exercised her brain.

"It ain't far-fetched that Norman has hitched a ride with the Eclipse. If that's the case, then it's safe to bet they're marching in lockstep toward a singular goal. I ain't privy to what they want with Charlotte Sierra, but if I had to wager, it's her blood they're lusting after. I still can't wrap my head around their interest in her blood, but we'll halt them at any cost.

"Eclipse ain't getting what they desire, not on our watch," she declared. "That's why the Silver Blade will throw down every damn barrier to stop 'em!"

A chorus of agreement erupted from the members.

"Now then, I need five volunteers to bolster the others at the Black Market, keeping tabs on Norman's movements. Who's up for it?" asked our leader.

Without hesitation, I shot my hand up. With plenty of off-days from the academy, I had more free time than I knew what to do with. Instead of twiddling my thumbs, I figured I might as well take the plunge. Besides, I'd be the main player when Norman hit Hertan, so firsthand intel trumped secondhand any day.

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The moment my brother and I entered his hideout at the Black Market, a punch was thrown at me. I didn't even have time to react. Before I knew it, my body was propelled backward by the force of the blow, and my glasses were sent flying to the floor. I instinctively covered the spot where I got hit and shot a glare at the one who threw the punch.

My brother regarded me with a cold expression as he obliterated my glasses with his boot. "You sure know how to piss me off, Martha. I can't believe the audacity you just displayed. Why the fuck did you sell those women? They're my fucking properties! They're not yours.

Who gave you the right to sell them?"

I reached into my pocket, pulled something out, and tossed it at him. He effortlessly caught it in midair.

"What's this? Wait, is this an ancient coin? You sold those women for something like this?"

I nodded, "I believe this will be much more helpful to you than those women," I explained. "You're starting a new business, right? Selling those women would provide the budget you need."

My brother chuckled darkly while examining the ancient coin in his hand. After a sinister laugh, he tossed the coin at me, hitting my forehead.

"Nghh!"

Before I could process what happened, another blow struck my face. He had kicked me square in the face, the force sending me sprawling on the floor. But it didn't stop there. My brother approached me where I lay and started stomping on my face. The blows were so brutal that it seemed like he was trying to kill me.

I wanted to believe otherwise because he was my brother, but with each strike to my face, that belief was slowly fading away.

"The fuck are you rambling about, huh?! Why the fuck would I need money more than women?! You're out of your damn mind, you dumbass sister! I don't damn need this money! I damn need women!" His tirade echoed in the dimly lit hideout. After brutally stomping on my face, he decided to follow up with a forceful kick.

The impact reverberated through me, making it feel like my neck was on the verge of twisting, and I was violently thrown aside like a discarded ragdoll. "You useless, fucking prick."

In the aftermath of the onslaught, my brother seized my hair, yanking it with a cruel force that forced my gaze upon him. Blood oozed from my battered nose, staining the floor as he lifted my head. His eyes held a madness that seemed ready to end me.

"Who the hell did you sell them to?"

"...Ugh." I struggled to speak, my mouth feeling heavy. Attempting again, I managed, "...I don't know."

The moment those words slipped from my lips, another brutal punch crashed into my face. My vision, already blurred, descended into a disorienting haze with each hit.

"You fucking worthless," he spat with contempt, the venom in his words laced with hatred. "You know what? I should've tossed you into a damn brothel ages ago if you're this useless. Maybe I'll do it tomorrow. Oh, but I guess you're still a virgin, huh?" He rose, his grip on my hair unyielding as he hauled me somewhere.

"The whorehouse I'm selling you to despises virgins, so I suppose I should claim your virginity myself," he nonchalantly remarked, as if discussing mundane matters. There was no hesitation, even though we were siblings. "You're not my usual type with that boyish look, but your body is perfect, so I suppose it'll have to do."

I heard a door creak open, and he forcibly pulled me into the room beyond. Dragging me deeper, after a while, he callously threw me onto something soft – a bed, I supposed. My eyes reluctantly focused on my brother as he began to shed his clothes.

Was this truly to be my fate? I pondered as my vision blurred and wavered. I had once yearned for a normal romance, but with a brother like him constantly thwarting my path, such dreams seemed impossible. The virginity I had hoped to share only with someone I loved and married was now on the brink of being taken by my own brother.

As I lay there, the impending horror of being deflowered by him and then shipped off to prostitution dawned on me. Normal romance appeared to be an unattainable fantasy.

But... I wished my first time would be with someone I cared for. I didn't want my brother to be that person. I wanted it to be with someone I loved. Someone like... ahhh...

Why did his face come to mind now? We had only met once, right? Moreover, he already had a lover. So, why did his face invade my thoughts? Perhaps, in a desperate bid to escape my current predicament, my mind conjured an image hidden in my subconscious. Maybe I liked that man, and I was only realizing it now.

My brother finally discarded his clothes, then loomed over me. He began by forcefully tearing off my clothes, leaving me exposed. Once done, he licked his lips with a predatory leer.

"If you had just obeyed me, none of this would have happened," he sneered. I felt him yank down my underwear, leaving it tangled around my thighs. Leaning in, I sensed something rigid brushing against my skin, slowly making its way between my thighs. "Oh, and consider this a punishment. I'll penetrate you, even if you're not wet yet."

Closing my eyes, I bit down on my lip, bracing myself for the impending pain. However, before he could proceed any further, an abrupt knock echoed through the room.

"Sir Norman! S-Someone's infiltrated our base!"

"What?!" my brother snapped. "Have you captured them?"

"I-I apologize, Sir, but we still haven't yet," the voice on the other side quivered.

"Useless!" my brother spat, the disdain evident. He abruptly left the bed, leaving me exposed and vulnerable. "Why are all of my people so damn useless?" With forceful determination, he bound me to the bed, securing me with chains already affixed to its legs. "This will ensure you won't escape, Martha."

His intent to return after concluding his business loomed, granting only a fleeting sense of relief. The impending violation lingered like a malevolent shadow.

As my brother stormed out, the door slammed shut, leaving me in a silent anticipation. I allowed my consciousness to surrender to the inevitable descent into slumber. In that surreal state, a woman's voice reached through the darkness.

"It's okay," she whispered, a soothing melody against the oppressive atmosphere. "You won't be deflowered by him. I'll make sure of that." Skillful fingers worked to liberate me from the confining restraints, each movement a symphony of salvation.

"...Who are you?" I asked, my vision blurred, the identity of my savior elusive.

"...I'm Sneaky Rat," she declared, a beacon of hope breaking through the shadows.

"Why are you doing this?" I weakly inquired, a feeble plea echoing in the dimness.

"Because my master doesn't want anything bad happening to you," her response resonated with determination.

For a fleeting moment, I pondered the enigma of this mysterious master. Yet, in the face of imminent salvation, such musings felt inconsequential. With that realization, my consciousness succumbed to the enveloping darkness.