

## The World 73

### Chapter 73: The Nine Fangs Of The Underground

Let's rewind a bit. This happened hours ago after Leon found out that Martha had died.

\*\*\*

Elise's POV

Nine women, myself included, gathered in the Dark House—a meeting spot for the Nine Fangs located in the former lands of the Kingdom of Bethlan.

We were hashing out the events that unfolded at the Black Market last night. Eris, the fiery redhead with a mane that could rival a lion's, led the Silver Blades—a group dedicated to overthrowing monarchs. She had summoned the Nine Fangs for this urgent assembly, and her voice resonated with anger as she slammed her fist onto the round table where the Nine Fangs were gathered.

"What do you mean, not do anything about it?" she hissed, her frustration cutting through the air. "My people were slaughtered last night because of him! Didn't we all vow to unite against the higher-ups in the underground? So, why, of all people, are you opposing an attack on the Black Market, Nyx?"

Nyx, shrouded in mystery beneath the cascade of her long, black locks, addressed Eris with an unwavering composure. "Where would that lead us, Eris? The Black Market, a colossal force in the underground, is a vital source of income for many of us. Are you suggesting we sever those ties just because some of your comrades fell in battle?

What about those within my organization reaping benefits from the Black Market?"

"What a lousy reason! Do you really hold people in such low regard that you won't act against the Black Market just because you're profiting from them?! I thought you were someone with compassion for humanity, and yet, here you are aligning with an organization that values human life so little!" Eris spat her anger at Nyx.

"Calm down, Eris," I interjected. Her thunderous voice grated on my nerves, prompting me to intervene. "On a personal level, I too yearn to dismantle the Black Market for its repugnant nature, and I'm itching to confront Norman Amarathea. However, charging in recklessly isn't wise. The Black Market is a formidable force, boasting powerful members, including Amarathea. Moreover, that man was present.

Even if he's currently unable to fight, overcoming him won't be a simple feat. That's why I suggest we refrain from taking any hasty actions against them for the time being."

"What?!" Eris exclaimed. "What do you mean, Elise?! Are you telling me we won't do anything against them?!"

"I'm not saying that," I clarified.

"You might as well have!" she screamed. "We can't just take this lying down, idly sitting on our asses waiting for more deaths! Seras, Dorothea, why aren't you saying anything?! Last time, your members died too, didn't they?!"

Eris seemed to have hit her breaking point, rising from her seat with her finger pointed at Seras, the Queen of all Bandits, who sat with arms crossed under her ample bosom and eyes closed, and Dorothea, the Leader of the Witches, known as the Black Witch, who just looked at Eris with a smug expression.

Seras, keeping her eyes shut, whispered, "The Black Market isn't my foe," her voice carrying an air of solemnity. "My people, hired by Norman, fell during their daring raid on Santuria's plane. It was Light Magic that claimed them. Neither Norman nor that man possesses such power."

"Tsk," Eris clicked her tongue in disdain. "So that's the tale?! You're all forsaking your oaths!"

"We're not betraying, Eris," I responded. "We were merely safeguarding our ranks. Imagine the havoc if we plunged into an all-out war with the Black Market. How many lives would be extinguished? How many allies and members from each of our factions would meet senseless demise?"

"Don't attempt to justify it, Elise! I mean, you don't harbor any interest in any of us, right? Your sole purpose in joining the Fangs is to find your little brother. Word has it that you've already located him. Judging by your body language and your lack of initiative against the Black Market, I presume you've already fucked him. You have, haven't you?"

I resisted the urge to unleash my power on Eris, feeling a surge of frustration at her misconception. How could she be so wrong? We haven't engaged in any intimate acts yet.

"Heh. What a twisted big sister, jumping into bed with her brother the moment she finds him. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"We didn't grow up together, so it's only natural for us to develop those kinds of feelings," I calmly explained.

Dorothea chuckled, "Stop trying to rile up Elise. It's never going to work. She's on cloud nine because she found her long-lost brother now."

Eris erupted with a fiery anger that echoed through the room, her words cutting through the air like a blade. "If none of you will take action, then I'll handle it myself," she declared, her voice filled with resolve. In a swift motion, she spun around, her chair crashing to the ground as she stormed toward the door.

But before she could grasp the handle, Ignis, a woman with an equally fiery mane, called out.

"Eris, wait."

"What? Trying to stop me?"

"I doubt I can stop you, no matter how hard I try. You're resolute," Ignis responded.

"Then what's your point?"

There was a momentary pause, the tension in the room palpable, before Ignis spoke, "If you encounter someone wearing a white Comedy Mask, I need you to run as fast as you can, alright? I'm saying this not as a Fang, but as your sister."

". . . ." Eris fell silent, the weight of Ignis' words sinking in. "Don't dictate what I should do.

I know what I'm doing. I don't need your assistance." With those words, she defiantly swung the door open and walked out, leaving the room.

\*\*\*

Arianne's POV

Leader emerged from the Dark House, her countenance twisted into a visage reminiscent of an enraged lioness. The air surrounding her seemed charged with the tension of an unresolved conflict. Whatever discussions unfolded within those walls had left a bitter taste. In silence, she mounted her horse, the steed registering its surprise with a startled neigh, swiftly subdued by Leader's firm grip.

I discarded my cigarette, its embers extinguished beneath my heel, and approached my horse. "Looks like things didn't go your way."

"I should have expected as much," she hissed.

"Then why wear that expression? Didn't you anticipate it to spare yourself the disappointment?"

"I assumed at least some of them would agree with me, but none did. They just brushed me off, advising against hasty actions. They don't take me seriously! Why do they see me as a child?! I'm one of the fucking leaders of an underground organization, for fuck's sake!"

I ascended onto my horse. In contrast to Leader's steed, mine remained silent, unfazed by my mounting as opposed to the startled neigh that followed her actions.

"What's our next move? Proceeding with the plan?" I inquired.

"Absolutely. I can't let what Norman did slide after the harm he caused to our members..." she hissed. "I'm gearing up for a direct confrontation with the Black Market. Not as a Fang member, but as the leader of the Silver Blades."

"Are you certain about this?" I questioned. "That man is tied to the Black Market. If we go to war with them, he'll likely manipulate things to ensure their victory."

"I don't believe he'll make a move in his current state," she asserted. "But if he decides to engage in war with us, then..."

"Then what?" I pressed for an answer.

He retrieved something from her pocket—a crumpled piece of paper. Tossing it my way, she declared, "Then I will make a deal with the devil."

I unfolded the paper and examined it. It was a wanted poster of a man wearing a white Comedy Mask. The bounty on his head was unusually high for a first offense. Even for someone as sinister as him, such a hefty sum on his head for the first bounty was unprecedented.

Well, considering the man in the white Comedy Mask's notorious deeds, the amount seemed justifiable. He had earned the dubious honor of being the common enemy number one of the entire Magic Knight community.

"Are you sure about that?"

"There's no harm in trying," she affirmed. "He might be our chance to finally break free from his control."

"But... aren't you being a bit impulsive?" I queried. "Why didn't you mention that you were planning to seek help from the Nine Fangs for the entire Silver Blades? Why just me? And... I don't want to imply that you're misjudging your priorities as our leader, but why haven't you discussed your plan with the entire organization first?"

Leader's gaze fixated on the moonless yet unusually luminous night sky. "There's a traitor in our midst."

I staggered back, a chill running down my spine. "Wha...? A traitor, you say?" The word hung heavy in the air, loaded with the implication of betrayal within our ranks. Could it be? And if so, who? "Don't tell me..."

you suspect Shredica as the traitor?"

"It's not her. I am sure of that," she asserted, her voice carrying the weight of certainty. "But based on what she unveiled about her confrontation with that man, I can sense an enemy lurking within our organization. However, I don't know who. That's why I haven't disclosed all my plans to everyone in the organization yet; the traitor might catch wind of the information and relay it to that man."

The revelation cast a dark shadow over our situation. An enemy within our ranks? The absurdity of it lingered in the air.

"I understand your disbelief. I too am grappling with this. But," she tugged on her reins, and her horse let out a resonant neigh. "For now, let's return."

"...Right."

With that, we set off, the uncertainty and betrayal echoing in the hoofbeats of our horses as we made our way back to the base.