

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Hey there! Sorry for the huge delay! As some of you know I burned my dominant hand during the festivities, and I had to wait like 7-10 days before I was able to write again without being constantly in pain.

That said, I hope you will enjoy the chapter! It has not been an easy write, struggled a lot with some characters and dialogue. Hope the final result is satisfactory! I will try to publish next chapter as soon as possible as I have already started writing it!

THIS CHAPTER HAS NOT BEEN BETAED YET! (I will upload the betaed chapter as soon as I get it!)

Chapter 53: To be King

Riyuro had known he was special ever since he was born into this world.

Ideas and concept never thought of before came to him easily. Military matters, politics, and development, he was able to engage in such conversations since he was a youngling.

Him devouring that rare ore was just the cherry on top capable of adding unrivaled might to his mind.

He had united the warring clans under his claws, burying the axe of long-lasting grudges, showing the merits of his idea and using his newfound position to implement them. Bringing upon the Quagoa a golden age never seen since the rise of Pu.

They arose from the caves where they were banished generations ago, they challenged the weakened dwarves aided by their enslaved kin. They brought reckoning to their foes, for that was the right of the strong against the weak.

He grew arrogant in those times, thinking he was mighty and unstoppable, then he met a true force of nature. The White Dragon Lord and his kin, he never felt so small and insignificant than the time he had come face to face with a true powerhouse. It had been a very much needed humbling moment for him.

For all anyone standing at the peak thinks they are the strongest, that is but a fool's illusion, there were always larger monsters out there, and he was sure that was true for the Dragon Lord as well, he just didn't meet his match yet.

Though, for all he knew the truth of the world, he didn't expect to come across such a monster when he made his move against the Dwarven capital.

His soldiers either burned, froze, or were struck down by lightning. And the one responsible for that? An unknown foe never seen before.

He had long ago dismissed the notion of that thing being a dwarven secret weapon. If they had such a thing they would have used it already. No, this was someone else, someone that had no business in standing in his way.

On hindsight, he should have retreated, but it was too late now, his kin would not fall back even if he ordered so. They were too prideful and bloodthirsty to see reason. So much for being king...

They pressed onward, even reaching the walls only for large explosion to detonate as soon as they made that final leap.

It was utter chaos, it was impossible to see how many were already lost.

Their only hope was to breach the gates, though he already tried and gained a nasty burn in response.

This was hopeless, with an heavy heart he made his choice.

“RETREAT! BACK TO THE TUNNEL! GET OUT OF RANGE!”

He roared as his remaining commander could be heard resonating his orders all over the battlefield.

Quagoa were a hot-blooded race, as he expected, many were too stubborn or intoxicated by the battle to care and listen to his orders. They will serve as the necessary fodder for the most sensible soldiers to manage to escape.

‘So, this is the taste of defeat... a most unpleasant bitterness’ he thought as his kin fled the walls, leaving behind those too stubborn to listen.

For all they had failed he still had accomplished his goal. This will be the diversion they needed to catch Feo Raidho unguarded.

‘Victory will be ours in the end, this I swear as King of the Quagoa!’ with that oath proclaimed to himself, the only remaining thing was to reorganize themselves and attempt a siege with as few casualties as possible.

{Arche's P.O.V.}

The noble heir of the Furt family didn't know if she should be in awe, speechless, or completely terrified out of her mind by the scene she had just assisted to.

Her Master, the 6th tier magic caster Satoru, had just repelled an army of demi-humans numbering around ten thousand by himself, using only his magic and without any mana potion to replenish his magical power.

“It has been sometime since I had last to exert this much power at once, I feel slightly tired... umu, it must be the age taking its toll on me year by year.”

Arche had no idea how to respond to such a declaration. She was undecided if to laugh hysterically or berate the man, not that she had a choice, as her mouth refused to move to formulate any words.

“Master S-Satoru, what the hell was t-that?”

For once she could not fault her fellow apprentice from using his crass language when talking, as that was the exact question she wanted to ask but could not.

“That, Rayne, was a battle, a true battle where a magic caster of no small power had a hand into, resulting in a crushing victory.”

‘That was no battle, that was a massacre’ that was what she thought, but who was she to doubt her Master's words? She had never seen a true battle before, she only heard stories depicting the battlefield as the ultimate occasion for nobles to distinguish themselves in battle and strategy. But if this was an average battle... she could not help herself but discard those notions.

She felt a hand on her shoulder she turned to meet the green eyes of the slightly younger boy who lately had served as her study companion.

His hand was trembling, no, that was not true, he one who was actually shivering was her.

“Rayne, Arche.”

Both of them immediately turned toward the voice that called them.

“You both have learned from me for this last year, I have enjoyed every moment of it and both of you managed to teach me some things as well... today you have seen what a magic caster of the highest caliber can do when pushed.”

Their master spoke in a soft tone compared to his usual cold one.

“I had no mercy, I had no hesitation, because if I did, this city might be burning at the moment, and you two might be dead alongside countless others... this is the reality of war, this is the truth of the world we inhabit.”

He explained to the speechless duo.

“Compassion and kindness have their place and the battlefield is not one of them, but I understand that this is not a path all want to walk on... it is far too easy to lose oneself on the path to power... to forget what love and kindness feel like in the wake of such evilness and violence.”

He instructed as if he was just explaining another magical theory.

“You must find balance, you mustn’t let yourself go, it is not simple, and I can attest to that, this will be a constant war inside you... so, if you don’t wish to walk such a path, I will understand

and find you a good and safe place among those who wish to study magic for academic purposes alone.”

He offered as he used both his hands to ruffle the two apprentices' hair.

“But if you wish to bring a change into the world and strive toward my own path in life, I will do my utmost best to support you two, but that is something only the two of you can decide.”

Satoru concluded his speech to them by leaving the scene and immediately being drawn into a conversation by a very frenetic Commander in Chief.

She really had no idea how Master Satoru did it. He had been very gentle with them, explaining things and making them reach their own conclusions ever since they had started learning from him.

He wasn't at all like her old teachers at the Academy. She would have never been allowed that much freedom to experiment and think for herself, she would have never become the self-accomplished caster she was today.

And yet, for all his kindness, every time he fought she would see a monster in dark robes bring destruction and death upon the world in a scope she never thought possible before.

How could those two so different beings be one and the same? Was this what becoming a magic caster specialized in combat meant? No, that wasn't right, she knew battle magic casters and they weren't even near that level of intimidation.

Maybe the difference was that Satoru battled as if his life was on the line every time... and was he really wrong? As strong as any caster was, a lucky arrow in the neck or the eye would mean death... were her old teachers fools for believing that their magic

made them untouchable? Was Satoru's approach the only true approach at being a battle caster if you didn't want to meet an unfortunate early death?

She had no idea, but she wanted to know. And by understanding it, she will finally formulate her answer to her master's question! That was the way of a true apprentice of the magic caster Satoru!

{Hours later}

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

She looked down from the walls, her lips sealed in a silent vow no one asked for and which she was afraid to break in fear of what could come out.

She could barely register the stench of burning corpses under her. Hundreds of demi-humans' remains piled up and torched.

She thought certain scenarios could only be seen in hell, but apparently this was the real world.

Was this war? Was this what being a soldier meant? No! she would not be so arrogant to think so! She stood here, mighty and privileged, upon a wall, not needing to rise a finger. To be a soldier meant being down there, among the flames and blades whose only aim is to kill you.

War is hell.

There was no other conclusion she could reach.

As a noble lady she had been thought of the great victories of her kingdom. The hundreds of thousand marching for their kingdom's glory and freedom. Those numbers were astronomical if compared to the ones she saw today. She could not even there think about what a war with those numbers would look like.

How could anyone think such a thing was glorious?! In which pathetic delusion would they need to live in to even ponder such a thing in their minds!? Let alone say so aloud!?

Where was the glory? The chivalry? The honor?... lies, all of them!

She clenched her teeth, as if trying to keep something caged inside her body, of what that something was, she had no idea, but she didn't want to let it out anyway.

She had no idea how long she remained there, she only knew that at some point everyone had left and she was alone with her knight.

“Lady Lakyus.”

She heard the words of the older woman as if coming through a stonewall. She almost did not feel the hand that now laid on her shoulder as the older blonde lightly pushed her away from the edge of the walls.

She felt like a ghost as she descended the stone stairs and was escorted through the now empty streets.

She did not know how to deal with this, how to accept this.

It would be so easy to blame someone, the Quagoa? The Dwarves? Satoru? But she was aware of how delusional and hypocritical that was.

If Satoru didn't stop the Quagoa, the streets around her would be on fire and drenched in fresh blood by now. If Satoru intervened, the Quagoa would be massacred and the result of that laid outside.

And could she even have the right to have a say on that? For all she thought she was strong, she could have changed nothing, regardless of what she chose, the outcome would not change. The

only ones who could take such decisions were those powerful enough to bring a change, like Satoru.

And it came again down to that, power, the thing this world could apparently not get enough of. The greatest currency among all races. Something that didn't discriminate or distinguish between a human or any other being living or otherwise.

And yet, power was the reason why individuals could impose themselves upon others.

That was all too complicated! She could not wrap her mind around this! She run into walls continuously! There was no exit from this maze of contradictions!

'Renner would unravel it...' the sneaky, involuntary voice whispered in her mind.

'But she won't, because we are not friends anymore!' she angrily replied to her own traitorous mind as if to validate her own opinion to no one but herself.

No one said it aloud, but that was the unspoken agreement.

"Here, have some water."

Lakyus blinked at those words before realizing she was now sitting on a stone bench and Leinas was offering her a leather canteen.

She hesitated before grabbing it and taking a big gulp, she almost choked on it as she didn't feel the water pour down her throat.

"We should probably return to our rooms before it gets too late."

Her knight said in her usual stoic tone even though she could see the worry in the older blonde's eyes.

“Why? It isn’t even dinner time yet.”

Lakyus rebutted with no real energy behind her protest.

Leinas went down on one knee, in front of her as she moved to envelope her hands with hers.

“Lady Lakyus, you have ben sitting here for hours by now.”

Her words took Lakyus aback. What was she talking about? They had spent an hour at max walking through the city...

“It... was?”

She questioned in a whisper that prompted a worried expression to take over Leinas’ visage.

“You need some sleep.”

The knight stated without giving her any chance of retorting her words.

“I... do?”

She asked again, maybe she just looked tired.

Leinas knelt with concern and before Lakyus could say anything, she was lifted princess style in the older woman’s arms.

“We are going, now.”

She began to move. Only now Lakyus was noticing how tired and sleepy she was, the gentle rocking of the older knight’s walk was lulling her, and before she could realize what was happening her eyes closed and she slipped into the world of dreams.

{Gaul’s P.O.V.}

The Commander in Chief, Gaul Fellhammer, often despised the councilmen of his kingdom. They seemed completely out of touch

with the events and what they meant for the kingdom. Too busy ruminating over their own affairs and the little commerce they could still carry on among themselves.

Though, he could not fault them this time, as even he, well versed as he was on the current state of their kingdom, could have never predicted such a thing.

When he heard of the attack, he thought that they were done for, that they would have to fall back on Feo Raidho before abandoning the mountains completely. He had thought of countless deaths, not only by the claws of the Quagoa but from starvation and lack of resources as well.

He thought this would have been the end of their crumbling kingdom.

And yet, that didn't come to be. That fate was averted by one single man, one single entity, one single being.

Most would say that it was divine intervention, the temples would surely enjoy that. But this was no god who descended and saved them from annihilation. No, the one who did so was but a mortal with powers that went beyond Gaul's comprehension.

It was no wonder the current topic of discussion was, in fact, that one man.

“THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS! I WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS!”

The Forgemaster yelled as loud as he could, enraged at the suggestions of his peers.

“SHUT YOUR MOUTH! THE GOD OF EARTH HAS GIVEN US A CHANCE TO SALVATION AND YOU WANT TO THROW IT AWAY?!”

The High Priest of Earth rebutted as if the other dwarf just spouted the most blasphemous of things.

“THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE GODS YOU LUNATIC FREAK!”

The words were spoken with such venom the High Priest jumped back scandalized.

“ORDER! ORDER! OR I WILL HAVE YOU THROWN OUT!”

The voice of the Cabinet Secretary raised above all others. Sometimes Gaul wondered if the dwarf didn't use some kind of spell to enhance his voice as he felt his very ribs reverberate with his words.

The room slowly calmed down till silence permeated the tension filled air.

“We have decided upon nothing yet, that, I would like for everyone to understand! I know this situation is... unprecedented, but we are the Regency Council! We must remain firm and evaluate the situation with cool heads and not action upon our personal feelings!”

The Secretary's voice returned to a bearable level. ‘As if you ever did that in the first place’ Gaul scoffed in his head, there was no way he would actually say it aloud, but the feeling remained.

“Now, for starters, Commander, please offer us your report again and what followed, please do not interrupt the Cmmander while he speaks!”

Gaul stood up from his seat at his words and prepared himself to tell the same tale for the umpteenth time.

“When we reached the walls, the battle had already started, we had burned through our Mithril ammunition and the enemy was already under the walls, I believe they numbered around twenty thousand, though it was hard to see in the darkness... Sir Satoru didn't waste any time and began using his magic... I... I can't really describe it, I don't think there are any words to accurately depict what happened from there on, I never heard of such a power, even in legends, flames and lightning consumed the Quagoa and burned through them like they were just paper... considering how durable their hide is... I am sure that those were very powerful spells.”

The Commander recounted what he remembered of the events, even though they were burned into his mind, he could not find the right words to translate those memories into words. He took a deep breath before continuing.

“I saw the Quagoa die in the hundreds, a battle that seemed completely lost had turned around in less than ten minutes thanks to one man... he only stopped when the Quagoa retreated and the last fools trying to still bring down the gates died, the esteemed enemy casualties are above three thousand, we had zero casualties and some injured due to general panic.”

He summarized the battle, no, massacre was more appropriate of a word to describe what just happened.

“I made sure to speak with Sir Satoru after it was over, he said that he had no intention of interfering further in our matters and that he would leave in a few days regardless of our answer to his proposition.”

Gaul concluded with a grimace.

“You see! This is why we need to agree on giving up that dead art! If we can convince this magic caster to aid us, we could turn around the war and end our kingdom plight!”

Interjected the Director of Food Production.

“THAT DEAD ART IS THE PRIDE OF OUR NATION AND KING YOU INSOLENT SWINE!”

The Forgemaster yelled back. But before an argument could escalate again, the Cabinet Secretary slammed his fist on his desk, the fact that he didn't say a word was indication enough that he was on the brink of having someone removed from the room.

“Very well then, if you could all act your age now... we are at a turning point in all of this plight we have suffered for years, if we can acquire the might of this magic caster, we might end the scourge of the Quagoa once and for all. Recovering the old capital might be a fool's errand due to the presence of the dragons but if we can stop the Quagoa we might finally have some peace.”

He finally spoke assessing what they had discussed till now.

“From my understanding the Council is currently divided on how to obtain such onerous services... the main solution would be to promise him what he asked for, moving all the Runecraft smiths to his territory... the other option is to try and opt for major commercial benefits for future business, though that is unlikely to work due to the impracticality of such exchanges over such a large distance.”

The Cabinet Secretary continued as his gaze lingered over each councilmember as if challenging anyone to interrupt him.

“We will deal with this the same way we dealt with any other decision; the majority vote will be the decisive factor.”

He stopped again, waiting for anyone to protest his words. Gaul noticed some of the councilmen not being thrilled at the prospect, chief among them was the Forgemaster, though no one had the balls to interrupt a near to snapping Cabinet Secretary.

“Before we vote, I would like to say something.”

The Forgemaster finally spoke up in a barely controlled tone.

“Go ahead.”

Invited the Secretary with a dismissive gesture.

The Forgemaster cleared his throat before addressing the council.

“Runecraft is the essence of our Kingdom, it has always been, we reached our peak mastering this Art of ours! To throw it away like this would be the same as selling our dignity and pride as a country! Desperate times call for desperate solutions, but I beg of you to consider not only our present, but our future as well!”

The Forgemaster waited a few seconds to let his words sink in before sitting down sealing the end to his short speech.

It might have been quite a good speech in any other situation, but Gaul knew that it would do no good at this point. To worry about the future was all well and good, but going onward without Satoru’s help, there will be no future to speak of for them. pride and dignity did little to no good when the opposite side of the spectrum was nearly complete annihilation.

“An inspiring speech Forgemaster, now... let us cast our votes, as usual I will remain a mediator and not vote unless the need for it arise due to a tie.”

The Cabinet Secretary explained as the councilmen prepared to decide upon the future of the entire Dwarven Kingdom.

{The Next Day}

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

The first thing she heard when she came back to her senses was the sound of someone groaning, it took her brain a couple seconds to connect and realize the one making that atrocious sound was her.

She felt terrible, almost as bad as the time she got drunk. Her head pounded and she felt as tired as when she finished a training session.

“How do you feel, young Lakyus?”

She heard the voice come from next to her but it still took her a good ten seconds to recognize who was at her bedside.

“Master Gazef?”

She half questioned as she had no idea what the older warrior was doing here.

“Yes, it is me, Princess Renner ordered me to remain at your side to make sure you would be alright... you gave us quite the scare when you disappeared and then came back completely unconscious in Lady Leinas' arms.”

The Warrior Captain explained much to her surprise, she didn't remember any of it... she could remember the meeting with the council, then... then the battle, she could not even recall when it ended, only confused flashes of images without order followed that. Fire, lightning, desperate screams and cries. The sound only seemed to worsen her headache.

Be it as it may, she was here now.

“We won the battle then.”

She said with no real emotion behind the statement.

“More like Satoru did all the work from what I have heard.”

Gazef gently corrected her statement.

“Yes, I guess so.”

She muttered turning around so to face the wall and closing her eyes.

Silence descended in the room for a while. For all she was tired, it seemed like her body was not willing to fall asleep again.

“Young Lakyus, I am not one to usually interfere in matters that are not my own, but may I ask what happened between you and the Princess?”

For all he asked gently, Lakyus could not help but feel like he just had plunged a knife in her back.

“I noticed how both of you didn’t speak a word to each other for a few days by now and avert gazes every time... it is not my place to say anything, but I would ask of you from one knight to another... please do not abandon Her Highness.”

His words were full of untapped emotions, she never heard her teacher speak like that, he had always been her strict and dutiful instructor, never in her entire life did she ever hear such... desperation in his tone.

She didn’t want to abandon her friend, truly, she didn’t, but she felt like Renner didn’t want to accept her and she was the one who decided to break up their friendship.

Satoru once told her that she was arguing with her because she cared about Lakyus’ wellbeing, she had believed him for a time,

but then, now it seems like Renner just wants her to do as she says even though she knows how important this is for Lakyus.

“Say Master Gazef, would you say you and the King... are friends?”

She asked, not knowing herself why this was the first thing that came up in her mind in this situation.

“I am sure that if you were to ask His Majesty, he would certainly say we are, if you were to ask me, I would say that I am a loyal defender of the King and his authority.”

The Warrior Captain answered with certainty and a hint of sadness in his voice.

“But isn’t it sad? If you were true friends, why would you be forced to obey every order of his? Why could you not call him a friend directly?”

That was a stupid question, she knew as much, but the most childish part of her could not repress that thought any longer, she wanted to know why this world was so fucked up that two clear friends should be divided by a power mechanic.

Power, again, that was the source of all those problems.

She waited for an answer, though the silence remained.

She almost felt like turning to check if Gazef was still there, or he left and she just didn’t notice, when her teacher spoke once more.

“It is as you say, in a perfect world he would call me friend and I would call him friend... in a perfect world, I would be able to disagree or question decisions I did not agree with... in a perfect world there would be no need for me to defend, guard, and serve the King... but, we don’t live in a perfect world.”

His words all but confirmed what she knew and what she despised above all. The resolute acceptance and defeat in those words almost made her blood boil. Was there no one in this damned world who would agree with her?! She was about to lash out when he continued.

“But that is also the reason that made us friends in the first place... when I saw the King for the first time, I didn’t just see a ruler, I saw a man who strived to make this world a better place... near to that perfection that we all so much wish for.”

He continued with a forlorn happiness in his tone, as he was reliving the happy memories of another life.

“I decided to help that man achieve it, for I knew that, no matter the power I held in my blade, I lacked what else the world needed for that change to happen... I got to know him, not the King, but the man under the crown... I saw an ideal that I wanted to follow, I bit my tongue many a time to stop what I was about to say or do because I trusted my friend to do the right thing, even if I didn’t understand it at first.”

He explained nostalgically before pausing to take a deep breath.

“A single man cannot change the world alone, they just could not possibly possess all the qualities required to bring that change, I realized that far too late in life, after I had already caused much pain and headaches for my friend... I could defeat all the enemies I wanted but there are some foes that no blade could ever hope to strike.”

He continued his tale, rapturing Lakyus with each word he spoke, her headache and tiredness long forgotten.

“Your strength can only do so much, you can convince people to follow you due to awe or fear, but to truly sway the heart of men toward a cause and bring change... that is only something a true King can do.”

He seemed to finish, but for all Lakyus found his words fascinating, she could not help but have questions.

“But... then, what happened?”

That might have sounded like a weird thing to ask, after all she had no idea of how the Kingdom was before, but if the King had truly been so adamant to bring change, why was the Kingdom still so... distant from that desired change?

Gazef did not answer her question immediately, she heard his chair creek and feared he would leave.

“the man under the crown had his heart shattered, he lost the drive and meaning he had in his life, he lost his love... usually, the most gentle of men, are the first to fall to the pains of the heart... and what happened to the man would reflect on the king, for they were one and the same, just two halves of the same coin... I still serve the king, for he is my friend, and it is my duty as a sworn knight, but that dream we shared is no more...I hope, sincerely hope, that the future will fall in the trails we left behind.”

Gazef explained, his tone almost broken, as if he was admitting a secret that was meant for no one to hear.

“Now... I need to return to my duties, for all I trust Satoru to guard the Princess, I would fail in my promise to the King if I left her alone for any longer now that I know you are fine, I will have someone sent your way.”

He said as the Warrior Captain slipped back into his dutiful persona before marching out.

“And... please Lakyus, consider what I asked of you.”

He whispered before leaving the room.

Lakyus remained there, unmoving, tears swelling in her eyes for a reason she herself did not understand. She just felt like crying right now, she felt like that would help her somehow.

And so she did, she cried and poured out her soul with the tears, as if this was some purification ritual.

She knew what she had to do. She now understood what she wanted to do. And she swore she would do it or die trying!

{Outskirts of Feo Jera}

{Pe Riyuro's P.O.V.}

The Great King of the Quagoa sat on a rock, the morale was at an all time low for his troops who just suffered the humiliation of dishonorable retreat.

This was not how he thought this battle would go, not that he could predict such a being to appear on the battlefield.

It was almost like the dwarves got their own dragon, though theirs seemed eager to do something while the Quagoa's did nothing but demand tributes over and over.

He would have gladly tried to tear out that one's throat if not for the fact that the attempt would have resulted in certain death.

But there was no meaning in getting stuck on regrets, he might as well embrace his role and accept what is to come.

“You called, oh greatest king?”

The sarcastic voice of Rayu reached his ears, it was a lucky thing the red furred Quagoa survived, else he would have no one to entrust this part of the work to.

“Cut your crap and listen.”

He ordered, making sure his tone was harsh enough not even a hotheaded Quagoa like Rayu would dare interfere.

“We have 15.000 troops remaining, I will entrust 10.000 to you, you will march them to Yozu and together you will smash Feo Raidho.”

He ordered much to the confusion of his old rival.

“Huh?! Did you hit your head?! You cannot possibly think to take the city with 5.000!”

Rayu protested vehemently.

“Obviously, you fool! But this is the only way! We cannot siege the capital! Not with that monster guarding the walls! We cannot make halfhearted assaults, or they will get suspicious something is going on! And once word of Feo Raidho getting attacked reach the capital, they might send that monster!”

Riyuro poured some of his frustrations in his words shutting Rayu up for good, it was seldom he lost his cold and calculating calm after all.

“The additional 10.000 will serve to completely overwhelm the city, I can buy you one day of time, in one day you must make sure to have destroyed the city beyond repair and then retreat back to Feo Berkana!”

He continued to instruct the red-furred Quagoa.

“What will you do?”

He asked coldly, as if he already knew the answer.

“I will have a squad go and deliver a message to the dwarves, I will offer a one on one duel to decide the battle, one of their champion against me... Greedy as they are, they will surely accept, just to have a chance to take my head once and for all... at the same time as the duel you will attack Feo Raidho, I am quite sure they will send that monster to fight me, so he will be occupied and unable to help the city.”

He explained much to his old rival growing rage.

“YOU ARE PLANNING TO DIE!? ARE YOU FUCKING MAD?!”

Rayu roared.

“Silence, you fool! Don’t let the others hear you! The morale is low enough already!”

Riyuro rebutted standing up from his spot.

“I am your King, you will do as I say! Are we clear?”

He got in Rayu’s face to get his point across.

“Why can’t I do it?”

The other Quagoa rebutted, still unwilling to back up.

“Because you are too weak, and it would be suspicious if I suddenly disappeared, they might get on to what we are trying to pull off, not counting that with this morale the 5.000 would not be willing to follow you.”

He explained calmly, there was no more need for intimidation, he could recognize the reluctant acceptance in Rayu’s eyes.

“What if they refuse the duel?”

He questioned once more, probably a last-ditch effort to have him change his plans.

“They won’t, but if they do... I will attack with the 5.000 at the same time of the duel and fight to the last one to buy you as much time as we can. You will have your diversion, one way or another... the duel is just to minimize our losses, after all I would be the only one dying in that case while the others would run.”

He explained further, at this point he was just entertaining Rayu, seeing how far the red Quagoa would go to try and find excuses for him not to go through with this.

Seeing that the silence was lasting this time, he sighed in relief.

“This is my responsibility as King, my last act to ensure the future of our kin, my successor will be Yozu, tell him this is my order and to accept the damned title without complaints!”

He instructed. It felt kind of refreshing and liberating to get that title away from him. For all he was proud of his achievements and titles, he could not help but feel the burden they placed upon his shoulder every day. He felt lighter now, he might as well enjoy these last hours as well as he could, feeling finally free like never before since his youth.

“Tsk! I might as well challenge him for the title then!”

Scuffed Rayu as Riyuro’s claws immediately went for his throat stopping bare millimeters from it.

“I swear that if you even try to pull that shit, I will come back from the grave just to carve out your throat!”

Threatened the King just before the red Quagoa moved aside his claws with his own.

“Nah, I don’t care about that shit, I might win, but I am not so stupid to believe I could be half the King he would, I am good at cracking skulls and tearing throats, not organizing shit all day every day.”

Rayu dismissed his previous statement with a shrug before leaving him there alone once more.

“I will go prepare the troops.”

He informed Riyuro as he marched away.

“Take care... cousin.”

Riyuro whispered to the retreating form of his old rival.

“You too... cousin.”

The king had no idea if he had just imagined the answer, as low as the whisper was, it might as well have been a trick of his mind.

He shook his head, that wasn’t important right now. He needed to prepare for his last great act as the Greatest King of the Quagoa.

He will show them! Oh, he will show them all! This is what it means to be King!

A.N.

Finally finished, I had to rewrite the second half of this chapters like 3 times! It never felt good enough for what I wanted to transmit to the readers. Hope the final result is good enough.

And yes, Lakyus had a dissociative shock moment there on the walls, I think is in line with the character when witnessing something her entire being goes against on a matter of principle and brought about on such scale and brutality.

Let me know in a comment/review!

Till next time! Stay safe!