

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Here we are, getting into the juicy part of the Dwarven Kingdom arc! Hope you enjoy! And thanks again to all my faithful patrons who allow me to publish so often! This month has been very difficult for me so your support greatly helped me to stay on my feet and continue writing even with all the things happening at the moment.

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

Chapter 46: A Dive into the Underground Kingdom

Pallum Bronzeknuckle, lord commander of Feo Raidho's defensive forces, was in his office pondering the new orders he just received from the Regency Council.

With every line his eyes went over, his rage boiled up like an erupting volcano. He barely reached two thirds of the blasted thing before his temper took over prompting him to launch the scroll across the room and bash his fist against his desk, leaving a visible dent in the shape of his fist in the wood.

“FUCK THEM ALL! THOSE SONS OF WHORES! FUCK THEM AND THEIR ORDERS!”

He shouted not even caring that such words could cost him his post and position.

His shouting apparently didn't go unnoticed as the door of his office slowly opened to reveal none other than his secretary Genna.

“If you shout a little louder there will be no need for an answer as the council would have heard you from here.”

She said as she picked up the scroll from the floor and began reading it.

Normally no one would dare talk to him in such a casual way, even less read his private mail without his consent, but then again not many could say that their wife was also their secretary.

“Well, we are fucked.”

Those were the only words Genna uttered as she placed the missive back on his dented desk.

Crass words but not untrue. The Regency Council have ordered him to organize an evacuation plan in secret, so to not cause chaos in the city. If these were anyone's but the council's orders he would have understood the need of it as they had been at war with the Quagoa constantly and evacuation procedures had to be taken in account. But considering how dissociated from reality the council was, the only reason they would give an order like that was because they knew Feo Raidho was done for.

‘So, the offensive has failed...’ the commander sighed in his mind. They had launched an offensive against the advancing Quagoa. It was a desperate move and a stupid one as well in Pallum's opinion. The Quagoa could no be stopped, their numbers were a testament to that, they nearly overshadowed every

dwarven army five to one, and if that wasn't enough, the more they advanced, the more ores they gained, further empowering their already overwhelming numbers.

Pallum had more than once got into a shouting match with the council about collapsing the tunnels leading to Feo Berkana, the fallen capital, that was the only way to at least stop the advancing army for a time. But no! The council just couldn't accept that there would be no way of reclaiming what was lost and instead left the main entrance to their territory opened to their enemies.

His vehement opposition to their decision was also why he was sent to the frontier city, away from where the decisions were taken, those fools simply could not accept someone spitting facts in their faces.

And now, they were asking him to retreat inside the mountain? Were they completely mad?!

Feo Raidho should be their last stand! If they lost this city they would lose every access point to the outside world, and any possible escape route with it. They would be trapped rats, waiting for the slaughter... a truly dreadful prospect.

He will sooner die than live a life where he only waited for the inevitable to happen... but then again, his eyes darted to his wife looking at him apprehensively, he couldn't just take reckless decisions anymore, he had a wife and child to care for. He wasn't the drunkard dwarf who was only content with beer and bashing skulls anymore.

“You must take Ari and leave.”

He finally said to his wife.

“What?! And what will you do?”

His wife rebutted.

“I will use these months to put up a defense plan, then I will try to make a last stand for the city, there is only one direction the Quagoa could invade from, so if we collapse the tunnel there-“

He was interrupted by his wife’s fist impacting with his desk, denting it further, now he will need to have it replaced for sure.

“DON’T YOU FUCKING DARE GIVE ME THAT SHIT PAL! LAST STAND?! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL ARI?! SORRY DEAR YOUR FATHER CHOSE TO BE A MORON AND DIE!?”

Gods, it was in moments like these that he remembered why he married his wife, that spitfire that punched his lights out in the tavern so many years ago when his drunken self slapped her ass. He had no regrets though, that ass was surely worth the broken nose.

“Lai, listen to me-“

He began trying to not escalate the conversation to a shouting mess.

“NO! You listen to me!”

She refused to let him speak but before the conversation could escalate any further a cough interrupted them.

Both turned to the source of the noise only to see a guard standing on the doorframe.

“I apologize for the interruption commander, but a situation came up and I think it is not something we can delay.”

The guard said as he continued to glance between Pallum, his wife and the dented desk.

“What is it?”

Pallum asked as he was relieved something came between him and his wife, he will have some more time to think on how to address his current problem.

The guard seemed to hesitate for a moment before answering.

“Our patrol... met a group of outsiders coming through the entrance to the east.”

Normally the guard’s words would be quite a shock and, indeed, Pallum was surprised, but not as shocked seeing how only a couple of weeks ago a lizardman managed to do the exact same thing.

“Are they hostile?”

He asked making sure he didn’t have a dangerous situation in his hands to add to the piling list of problems.

“No, they have been courteous ever since meeting our patrol, though...”

The man seemed to hesitate again, much to Pallum’s annoyance.

“Spit it out soldier! What is it?!”

He ordered in a harsher tone making the soldier tense up.

“They requested to speak with the highest authority in the city!”

The guard explained.

“And on what grounds do they demand so?”

Pallum asked, annoyed at these foreigners’ audacity.

“Well, one claim she is a princess from the Re-Estize Kingdom, two others are important noble from the same country, while two

more claim to be nobles from the Baharuth Empire... in their company they also have a lizardman and a few other humans.”

That took Pallum aback, what the hell was that? What in the name of the Runesmith King did that guard just say?!

“Are you telling me... that we have representative of two neighboring countries at our doorstep alongside another lizardman?”

He asked, all his fire suddenly extinguished by dread at the prospect.

For all the Dwarven Kingdom has been isolated for a long time, they were not ignorant on the world around them, their knowledge may be outdated but kingdoms remained the same even though the monarch changed.

Re-Estize and Baharuth were vast and powerful, if both came there at the same time there was no telling what they could want.

Conquest was a nearly impossible reason, even if they managed to bring armies up the mountains, the loss of men due to the dragons, giants and the war itself would not be remotely worth the gains. Another possibility was commercial agreements, but why now of all times? To what ends? Both countries have no shortage of natural materials to his knowledge.

“Where are they now?”

He finally asked the guard.

“We have accommodated them at the entrance of the city at the moment, we were waiting for your orders commander!”

Good, at least they didn't display ineptitude or discourtesy.

“Very well, have them brought here, to the guest room.”

He ordered as the guard saluted and left the room.

“How did we come to this?”

He asked no one exasperated at the situation.

It was hard to think that merely few minutes ago he was contemplating how to stop an invasion and plan a disastrous retreat to the interior, and now he was about to meet delegations from two different countries.

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

The young noble had no idea if she should feel surprised or underwhelmed by what she was seeing.

Their little merry band has finally managed to find an entrance to the Dwarven Kingdom, they even managed to find a patrol of dwarves, and too say they were short would be a disservice to the word, gods, some were even shorter than her! Not that she would voice that thought aloud, she had some manners after all!

First contact didn't go as bad as it could, no one drew any weapons and Satoru managed to convince them they were merely travelers interested in exploring. On their part the dwarves seemed quite on edge, though, to this moment, she has no idea what all that was about.

The city was, well, it was what truly divided her opinion. On one side the mere sight of a city built inside a cave was something few could boast about seeing, and her sense of adventure was tingling in excitement. On the other hand, the structures were... underwhelming... for a race hailed as great builders and forgers, they really didn't show it in their structures. She wasn't one for sculpting, or any fine art to be honest, but even she could say that

having most of your structures built like giant stone boxes with holes was just a step above living in shacks like the lizardmen.

The only structure which seemed to distinguish itself was the castle-like one in the back of the city.

They were escorted to the gates, another quite impressive sight. They were made out of solid stone, that was not something Lakyus would have ever thought of seeing, it made her wonder how in the world someone would be able to move something like that.

They were now currently waiting for the permission to enter the city and talk with the highest authority in order to avoid any possible misunderstandings and problems in the future.

Their command structure was unexpectedly militaristic in nature, if Lord Commander was a title referring to what she thought. Well, that might also be due to this being a frontier city.

“Lords and Ladies, you have been granted a meeting with the Lord Commander Pallum Bronzeknuckle.”

One of the guards announced attracting everyone’s attention.

“About time.”

She heard the black-haired woman, Lin, mutter under her breath.

“Please, let me escort you there.”

The guard continued as he moved away expecting them to follow.

Once they reached the giant gate, the dwarf placed his gloved hand on the side of the gate, immediately unreadable symbols appeared all over the stone as the two doors began to open up through magic much to the young blonde astonishment. ‘Is this the power of Runecraft?!’ she wondered in excitement at the

prospect of learning more about this power. She could probably get some pretty neat gear with that kind of power, not that she was displeased with her current equipment! But having something like that... seemed far too attractive to be ignored.

A dwarven city was... unlike any other she had ever seen. Taverns were a common sight in the Kingdom and Empire but not to such a degree. Literally, every four buildings she saw, one of them either was a tavern or sold alcohol.

The people, well, it was kind of strange for someone who was used to look up most of the time to now have most people at eye level if not lower than her.

Judging by Arche's and Rayne's expressions she wasn't alone in her shock.

“Remember children, no drinking, you are not yet of age.”

The words of the masked magic caster took the three of them out of their stupor.

“I think just a little bit wouldn't hurt, youngsters are always curious about these things, I remember that when I was their age, my master brought me to a tavern, and let's just say that, that night, I learnt about the pros of moderation.”

Gazef intervened as Satoru stroked his chin while humming as if contemplating the Warrior Captain's words.

“I guess there is no harm in letting them try if we are there to moderate them... so what do you lot say?”

The masked caster asked them.

Lakyus glanced around to see how her peers would react.

“Uhm, my father already let me try a little bit of watered wine... though, I never tried beer before.”

Rayne said as he looked excited at the prospect of trying something new.

“As a noble, I was supposed to start my lessons on wine in a few years, I heard that beer is considered a delight for the commoners.”

Arche glanced at Rayne who lost his excited gaze only to look back at her.

“W-well! I might as well try some, I suppose!”

She immediately added while reddening a bit as she averted her eyes. ‘What the hell is happening between these two?’Lakyus wondered as this was the first time she ever saw Arche backtracking from her statements. She usually was stubborn enough to defend her points no matter how wrong she realizes she may be.

The green-eyed noble turned toward the youngest of them, but much to her chagrin, Renner was already staring at her intensely as if to prompt her to speak first.

She gulped as those sky-blue eyes seemed to pierce her very soul.

She didn’t want to voice her opinion as she would feel like a child if she refused while those younger than her accepted, it wasn’t like she wasn’t curious to know how beer tasted but she remembered what her uncle told her about drunkards and their brawls.

“I-I guess I wouldn’t mind, just a sip.”

She finally decided to not be the only one left out. Renner gave her a smirk of complicity before opening her mouth.

“Seeing how you all are in agreement-“

She was stopped when the large and gloved hand of Satoru descended on her head, slightly ruffling her hair.

“Don’t even think about it young miss, you are far too young even for a sip.”

The princess didn’t seem to like his words as she pouted something fierce as she glared up at the giant caster.

“I am the third princess of Re-Estize!”

She protested much to Lakyus amusement, if there was someone who could get Renner to get all worked up when things didn’t go her way, that person was Satoru.

“Yes, indeed, and you aren’t even ten yet.”

He rebutted silencing an further protests.

“Then it’s decided! I am eager to discover what dwarven beer tastes like!”

The black-haired explorer declared, a vicious smirk directed on the three children on her face.

“Dear guests, the Lord Commander is ready to see you.”

One of the dwarves said as he came up to their group. Among all their discussing, Lakyus didn’t even notice that they had reached the castle like structure.

“Well then, I guess I will have to speak with this Lord Commander myself.”

The magic caster made to turn only for the blonde princess to cling on his gown.

“I will be right behind you then, I would like to ask some questions too.”

She said smiling up at him, all previous grievances forgotten.

“Then, as it is my duty to serve the royal line, I will serve as your escort.”

Gazef added, moving toward the pair.

“Your dedication is admirable Warrior Captain, but I have no need, I already have Satoru with me.”

The princess dismissed him, but Gazef shook his head.

“I apologize princess, but this I cannot do, it is my duty and your father’s orders to protect you at all times.”

Gazef denied the princess prompting her to sigh and shrug off in defeat.

“Very well then.”

Was all she said as she shifted closer to Satoru’s gown as they were escorted away.

Lakyus remained there unsure of what to do in the meantime as her mentor, patron and best friend were occupied. She might as well see what Arche and Rayne would do in the meantime. But before she could even turn toward them, she felt a hand come down on her shoulder. She turned only to gaze into deep black eyes.

“I have seen you how you looked at me for the entire climb girl.”

The older woman purred into her ear, making Lakyus slightly blush in embarrassment at the intimate close contact.

“W-what do you m-mean?”

She asked slightly nervous to know what the woman wanted from her.

“Oh, you know what I mean, you had your eyes glued to it the entire time...”

The woman continued as she let go of her shoulder but continued circling around her.

“I-I don’t know w-what you are insinuating, b-but I-“

She began using all her remaining boldness to try not to stammer or look weak, only for the woman to try and caress her chin, a movement a second hand immediately stopped by grasping the woman’s wrist.

“Is she bothering you Lady Lakyus?”

The question came just at the right moment, and Lakyus had never been gladder for Leinas’ silent presence before. Though, she had no idea how to respond as she didn’t want to escalate things.

The woman, on her part, immediately freed herself from the Empire’s noble’s grasp.

“And here comes the puppy thinking herself a bloodhound... your master asked for it the entire time and you just had to get in the way, didn’t you?”

The woman suggestive tone was now marred by some degree of annoyance. Leinas didn’t let the insult get to her and instead stepped between the woman and Lakyus.

“I didn’t take you for a coward little miss... I thought you were like me, a hunter seeking the thrill of the hunt, but now I see you are just another prey...”

The woman said, seemingly disinterested in pursuing whatever she was going for before.

Lakyus knew she should keep silent, that was the smart move, but she just couldn’t let those words be, she could tolerate many insults, but being a coward was not one of them! She had accused Master Brain of the same once before, and she would not let this... this... whatever she was, call her a coward!

“Take that back!”

She ordered, her tone no longer shy or insecure, as she stepped away from the protection Leinas offered, much to the knight’s chagrin.

“Oh? Did I offend you? Prey should know its place... unless you are not a mere beast to be hunted.”

Lin mocked as she tilted her head at her.

“You look at my weapon with challenge in your eyes, you lust for battle right next to me, what is a young maiden like me to understand from that? You want to fight? Let’s do it then!”

Her expression turned feral as she licked her upper lip and her hand twitched right next to her weapon.

Lakyus couldn’t exactly deny her words, after all she said was true. Though, did she have to put it... in such an embarrassing phrasing? If she didn’t know best she would think that this woman was trying to...

“That is enough! I won’t allow you to touch Lady Lakyus!”

Her embarrassing thought were interrupted by Leinas who went for her spear.

“You want to join in? That’s fine, I doubt that girl alone would offer a good tumble!... Well then, since we are talking good stuff now... let the two brats and the lizardman join too in the fun! All of you against little old me!”

Now she did it! That was the last straw! Lakyus wouldn’t allow this woman to go free after she insulted her honor so!

“Arche! Rayne! Get here!”

She ordered in her hardest tone, prompting the two young caster to immediately stand to attention and so as she said.

“Zaryusu if you would join us, please?”

She asked in a slightly more curious tone as the lizardman seemed to ponder his options before joining her side.

“Ah! Absolutely marvelous! It was about time I got some challenging opponents!”

Lin cried out happily as if she was thrilled at the thought of a five on one matchup. ‘I will make you eat your words by the end of this! I swear it!’ Lakyus determination burned in her eyes as she turned toward the guard who escorted them here.

The long brown beard was hiding his facial expression but the fear and worry in his gaze was not something so easily concealed.

“Is there a sparring arena or training ground around here?”

She asked as the guard hesitated before gesturing to follow him with clear doubt and resignation in his eyes.

{Satoru’s P.O.V.}

“I see, so this is your current predicament, I must say, it is quite unfortunate to hear this, Lord Commander.”

Satoru, the masked magic caster, offered his sympathies to the dwarf sitting across from him and Renner.

“Yes, my people have been weakening year after year with every city lost to us.”

The dwarf said as he sipped his beer.

“Still, if I may, I am most curious to why you are so eager to speak about your troubles with foreigners who just arrived... I hope you are not expecting our help in the matter.”

The magic caster asked in a curiosity-filled tone while stopping Renner’s hand for sneakily reaching for the mug of beer offered to him, much to the young princess annoyance. ‘This girl...’ he now regretted letting Gazef talk him into letting the youngsters try the alcoholic beverage.

“No, not at all, Lord Satoru... On the contrary, I am most interested in having you stay out of this as much as possible, my disclosure of such secret information is merely due to me trying to prevent an accident that could spark conflict between the human countries and my kingdom, still I hope the information I gave you will remain between the few of us and not spread across the city as that would only cause unnecessary panic.”

Satoru found himself nodding along the Lord Commander’s words. If they were unaware of the current state of the underground kingdom and ended up being attacked or even killed by the previously unknown threat, it could be the spark for a war.

Dragons in the capital, and an advancing army of underground demi-humans who were fighting in their natural habitat and possessed overwhelming numbers.

It all reminded him of some of the quests in Yggdrasil, if he was alone he would have embarked on such a quest only for the thrill it could offer him.

“Taking in account this new information, I think it would be best for us to leave as soon as possible.”

The Warrior Captain offered his advice. For all Satoru was clearly crossed with the idea of all this trip being for nothing, he could not fault the man’s thought process. It would indeed have been the right call, though that still didn’t really sit well with Satoru, who found himself quite disappointed at the prospect.

“I don’t think that is necessarily true Gazef.”

Surprisingly, it was Renner who spoke those words mirroring what Satoru was thinking in that moment.

“My Princess, this situation is far too complex to be resolved, even with our full support I doubt I and Satoru would make a difference against an army-“

The Warrior Captain protested.

“Who ever spoke about facing an army?”

Renner interrupted him with a small smirk on her face. The undead’s interest was piqued by that, he wondered what was going through that little devil’s head.

“Oh, did you think of something Renner?”

Satur asked, he knew that girl was no fool, and if she said that there must be a reason for her words.

“It is quite simple really, from the Lord Commander’s words, we know that these Quagoas are not real threat if taken singularly as tribes, the problem arose when they united as one single group, and the molding factor keeping them together to this day is this Pe Riyuro, their supposed leader, if we manage to take him out, the tribes will scatter and divide, or even better start an infight over the leadership.”

She explained, much to Satoru’s agreement, he nodded as he pondered her idea. That could be a good way of doing things. Avoid a losing war by taking out the leader and let the army afll apart in infighting, he was happy to know his stories of Ainz Ooal Gown’s adventures were not lost on her.

“That is indeed a possibility, I don’t know if the council considered it, but even then, Pe Riyuro is far too powerful to be slain in single combat and, with his army around him, the chances of that happening are extremely slim.”

The Lord Commander rebutted with a shake of his head making Renner frown and glance at Satoru for just an instance.

“Then do not fight him directly.”

Her simple and to the point answer seemed to confuse both the Lord Commander and Gazef. Satoru on the other hand, had an idea where she was going with this. ‘Clever girl’ he thought as he suppressed the impulse of petting her to reward her good use of her mind.

“If an enemy is too powerful to face directly, do it in the shadows... I would first try to capture some Quagoas, test what poison is extremely effective on them... if I am not mistaken, the Lord Commander said Quagoas are in need of dwarves as slaves

for mining operations and more advanced constructions as they are just a primitive race that has only strength going for them.”

She paused for a moment letting her words sink in and to test if anyone had any complaints with her points.

“I would try and slip some agents in a group meant to be captured... maybe miners, the Quagoas should be eager to capture them and not harm them... then the agents should try and slip poison into this Pe Riyuro’s food... if somehow that fails or this one is immune to poisons, extreme measures could be implemented, no matter how distasteful they may be, when it comes down to one’s race survival, there is little place for honor or mercy...”

A heavy silence descended inside the room, Gazef had an unreadable expression on his face, while Satoru was humming in approval of Renner’s points, as for the Lord Commander, his thick beard was covering his facial expression, but his eyes were wide in shock.

“W-what would those extreme measures b-be?”

The dwarf finally asked, prompting the serious expression on Renner’s face to harden even further.

“Food sources poisoning, collapsing tunnels on the enemy and diseases... compromise their food and no matter how powerful the leader is, with their numbers it will be a matter of days before starvation kicks in and brings with it the most horrible of acts... collapse the tunnels and the enemy troops will not only die, but lose access to important areas... spread diseases and, with their almost primitive technology, the enemy will have an epidemic in their hands in no time...”

The princess explained her points one by one. Efficient and to the point, that was all Satoru could think about, his human self would probably feel ill at the mere thoughts of such things, but his undead self had took over his mental state for a while now.

“Bring them to their knees not by strength, but by using their own culture against them... they never bothered to try and find reliable food sources or other means to sustain themselves, use that against them... they move in groups and are an easy target for large area attacks like the collapse of a tunnel, use that against them... they live pretty much on top of each other as their numbers grow without control, meaning a deadly disease will spread easily, use that against them... in the end, when it comes down to the complete annihilation of you or your enemy, there isn't much choice left... either abandon your morale and try to survive by any means necessary or do not and perish.”

Again, only silence greeted her words. Satoru looked around him, Gazef had an hardened look in his eyes, he wasn't sure how he should interpret it, while the Lord Commander was clearly stunned by the words uttered by the young princess. ‘And she isn't even ten yet’ the undead reminded himself of his own words.

It was ironic how such a lighthearted comment could be turned inside out and used in this situation.

As the atmosphere was getting darker and darker, Satoru decided to intervene.

“I think we should all think about the new information we have at the moment, maybe we should meet again in a couple of days and speak again once we have our thoughts in order?”

He said as he stood up, followed by Renner herself.

“Y-yes, I think we should.”

After a moment of hesitation, the Lord Commander agreed with an heavy tone, a far cry from the one used at the beginning of the conversation.

As they exited the building they were confused by the lack of their traveling companions.

“Excuse me, do you perhaps know where the group standing here has gone?”

Satoru asked the guard next to the entrance door.

“Sir, I believe they were talking about a training ground, I can escort you there if you wish.”

The guard answered professionally.

“Yes, please, we would appreciate that.”

Satoru thanked the guard as he proceeded to escort them toward the eastern part of the fortress where a large stone paved sparring or training ground laid.

As he finally arrived to the edge of the arena he almost fell like facepalming at the scene before him.

There, laying on the ground, groaning and moaning were five figures.

He immediately recognized his two students due to their colorful gear, one sprayed on top of the other, Lakyus was not laying far behind, judging by the trails on the ground he judged someone hit her so hard she was pushed from the front to the back of the arena. Zaryusu was laying on the ground almost as if he was sleeping if not for the pained grunts he emitted every now and then. The last

one, Leinas was right behind Lakyus, as if she tried to catch her when she was pushed back.

On the complete other side of the arena sat only one person. Her halberd buried into the ground as she used it as a support to lay her back against. Her black hair cascaded along her back as she stretched her arms like she had just woken up from a pleasant slumber.

“You are back, finally! I almost fell asleep.”

Lin said as she stood up and freed her weapon from the ground before placing it on her back as usual.

“What happened here?”

In the end it was Gazef who voiced what everyone was thinking at that moment.

“A little friendly spar, the five of them against me.”

The young woman answered nonchalantly.

“Do you want to test your luck against little old me as well? I am quite ready to go again after that warmup, the two of you against me, the strongest warrior and magic caster in all of Re-Estize, that sure sounds like an amazing time!”

She proposed clearly excited at the prospect.

“I will have to decline, there is no point in fighting a battle in which the outcome is already decided.”

Satoru refused the offer, he didn't want to face this one so early, he had no idea if she wanted to trick him into something, and going along with whatever she was trying was certainly the worst choice.

“A shame... and you even ended it up with such a bold declaration... you are just a tease, what is a maiden like me to do when she is being courted by such a cruel man?”

She gestured exaggeratedly around her as if she was interpreting a character in a comedy, all the while putting a childish pout on.

Satoru felt Renner’s small hand tighten its grip around his, she was probably creeped out by her exaggerated acting.

“Maybe another time, as for now, let us enjoy the first evening in the Dwarven Kingdom.”

He said changing the topic of discussion as he went to check on their downed companions.

{Hours Later}

{Renner’s P.O.V.}

“Ouch! It stings!”

Cried the green eyed blonde as the blue eyed one applied some healing unguent on her cheek.

“Quit whining Lakyus, this is what you get for being a blockhead and jumping into battles without planning, and also exhausting your magical power forgetting you should heal yourself afterwards.”

The third princess admonished her first and only friend with a small scowl on her face.

“She started it!”

The older girl complained as the younger flicked her forehead.

“I don’t care who started it, you truly messed up this time.”

The princess rebutted while continuing her ministrations.

“Well then, this should be enough, for the love of the gods, don’t touch there are scratch that zone till tomorrow, then you can heal yourself.”

The princess said while standing up and putting down the unguent.

Lakyus immediately followed her example and the two of them went downstairs where the rest of their group was waiting for them.

“Everything okay?”

Asked her beloved Satoru, a tinge of concern in his deep calm tone.

“Yes, we can go.”

Answered Lakyus who didn’t miss the chance to send a vicious glare at the smirking dark-haired woman.

They immediately moved out of their offered accommodations to march directly to the first tavern they found.

They sat at a table and ordered their drinks, she was quite disappointed she would not get to try that beer, she really had no idea why Satoru was so vehement in his denial, that only made her more curious to try it.

Satoru himself would not drink, which counted as a consolation price in her book, the first to actually try the beer was the female student Arche, she sipped her small mug and immediately upon swallowing started coughing much to the amusement of everyone.

“I will show you how to do it!”

The boisterous boy, Rayne, proclaimed while taking a large gulp of his beer.

“S-see?... N-nothing was ever e-easie-“

He wasn't even able to finish his smug comment that he could no longer contain his own coughing fit.

The adults were all smirking, even Leinas, which Renner thought was incapable of changing that expression from her face, was sporting a small grin from behind her own mug.

“Well, I guess it is your turn Lakyus.”

Renner said as she nudged the older girl sitting right next to her.

Lakyus on her part glanced at the two casters and her mug with some hesitation.

“Eh, she is all talk... just like this afternoon.”

That comment from the black-haired woman who was enjoying her mug lit a fire in the young noble's green eyes as she grabbed her mug and downed it all in one single sitting slamming the empty thing on the table once she was done, much to everyone's astonishment.

Even the black-eyed explorer seemed surprised at the turn of events.

As for the recipient of their attention, Lakyus didn't spit nor did she cough but her face was becoming an alarming shade of red.

“L-Lakyus, are you okay?”

Renner didn't mean to stutter like that but she also found herself slightly concerned with her only friends' predicament.

Said friend slowly turned to her, her green eyes seemingly unfocussed as she opened her mouth and-

BUUUURPPP

She released the loudest burp Renner ever heard right in her face before promptly collapsing facedown in the princess' lap, much to this last one disgust, shock and worry.

“Pffffff... ahahahahahah... she is out like a light from a single mug?! That's hilarious... ahahahahah...”

Lin erupted into laughter as both Leinas and Gazef looked in concern at the downed form of the young swordswoman.

Renner herself looked down at her friend mumbling incoherently in her lap. She sighed before bringing down her hand on the older blonde's hair, caressing her head gently.

“You are disgusting Lakyus.”

She said as her nose still could not get rid of the stench of her burp.

“B-but yourreee sho shoftt...”

The clearly drunk girl proceeded to slur out barely coherent words.

Renner sighed in exasperation, at least this time what came out what somehow a compliment and not stanching hair from her stomach.

A.N.

And done! Who wanted to see drunk Lakyus?! Eh...? No one you say! I know you are lying!

Jokes aside I had fun writing this chapter and this is the first chapter in awhile that only deals with our main group and no one else. I think something like this was needed right now since we are getting to the juicy parts here.

Well, that said, I hope you enjoyed the chapter, and remember to leave a review / comment with your thoughts!

Have a nice day, and stay safe!