

“Normal speech”

‘Thought’

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Hey good to see you all again! Hope everything is going fine for you! Sorry for the delay of this chapter but, as always, I have been taken away from my pc by real life problems. Well, what can I say? You smashed that 1000 reviews goal I had! Thank you very much! It may not seem like it, but your reviews are the fuel that make this story go on. It pushes me to try and do better every time. So, make sure to review! No matter how long or short, a review is a review and everyone expresses themselves in different ways!

Now, some people PMed me asking about why certain things went the way they went at that dinner and why certain topics weren't brought up. I would be glad to explain everything but it would take far too long and I don't want to write endless notes so I will limit myself to explain my mental process while deciding if something should happen or make any sense, so that, if you are confused for future events, try to use this process to come to your own conclusion. Well, here we go:

Example: why didn't Satoru announce/asked to open a shop in the empire?

1) Analysing the background:

- **Jircniv: the emperor of the empire. Magic is a very important cultural and commercial property in the empire, so much in fact that the market for magic items is**

nationalized.

- Satoru: an independent magic caster who took control of a whole kingdom's magical market in less than a year.

2) Imagining the scenario:

- The emperor invites Satoru to a dinner to get to know him (the two never met before)

- Satoru arrives and the two get to know each other a little.

- Tension rises between Satoru and the nobility after his comment on slavery.

- Satoru informs Jircniv about his intent of bringing his business to the empire.

(He basically blatantly said that he wants to undermine the empire's centralized magical market, which is currently under the control of the emperor, while he was invited to dine with said emperor to establish a good relationship).

Imagine this as if you were the sole potato seller in a city and then when someone new arrives you invite him to your house to become friends but during the dinner he tells you that he wants to open a potato shop in front of yours that sells the potatoes at half your price. That would take a lot of balls to say and indicate very little respect for the host.

3) Character's personalities:

-Is Satoru so bold that he would threaten the emperor's control on magical items to his face after he invited him to start good relations between the two of them?

The answer I would give knowing Satoru is a very big NO.

And this is mostly how I judge if something would happen or not.

Sorry for the long note but I hope this will help avoid long explanations in the future and maybe help some newbie writers too, I hope.

PS: Check out my discord channel (fanfiction by Zero-sama) on the fanfiction discord server (PM me for the invite code!).

Beta Reader: Don Orbit (go check out his amazing works!); SirWertsalot (I think Pathfinder: Wrath of the Righteous has taken my soul and turned it into an Azata. Now for my dose of Overlord fanfic)

Chapter 17: The Grand Conspiracy (part 1)

Hilma looked down at the parchment in her hands. Of all the things she expected that day, a letter from the Queen of the Draconic Kingdom was not one of them.

Normally she would not open letters addressed directly to Satoru, but her saviour was away at the moment. She had no idea how long it would take him to come back, and it was not like she could ignore the letter sent by a monarch from another country.

She glanced at the bunch of [Message] scrolls piled on her desk. Satoru showed her how to use them. She just had to activate it while thinking about him and the scroll would connect their minds; it wasn't as unpleasant a sensation as she anticipated but still, she wasn't eager to repeat the experience. Also, she was supposed to use them only in case of emergencies.

With a heavy sigh, her eyes returned to the letter as she took a little knife out of a drawer and broke the seal. As soon as she took out the letter, she immediately noticed the quality of the parchment. She sniffed it, noticing how it smelt of some fragrance she didn't know of. All in all, the letter was of the

highest quality. Just that indicated that the content would be pretty important, not counting the fact that she had to argue for half an hour with the courier who brought the letter as he was instructed by his Queen to deliver the letter directly to Satoru himself.

Pushing that unpleasant experience to the back of her mind, she unfolded the parchment and began to read.

*To the most prestigious and esteemed Magic Caster Satoru,
I present myself to you as the first Queen of the Draconic Kingdom, Draudillon Oriculus, also known as the Dark Scale Dragon Lord.*

During the past few months, it didn't pass a day without hearing mention of your great and progressive way of handling business when it comes to magical items. Many of my advisors, myself included, believe that your way of handling magic will greatly change the whole continent in the years to come, bringing a golden age in magic development.

As much as I would like to discuss more of this subject with you, I am afraid that my reason for contacting you is far more nefarious.

As you probably know, my beloved country and citizens have been at war with the Beastmen tribes for the last 3 years. Due to their great resistance and physical prowess, they managed to take various cities and any attempt at stopping them merely slowed them down; or at least that was the case until the siege of Almagda.

We hired adventurers from the Re-Estize Kingdom in order to aid us in protecting the city from the invasion. To say we were

amazed by their performance and magical items would be an understatement. We are elated to see with our own eyes the wonders you manage to equip adventurers with.

Hilma stopped reading as her lips curved into a smile at the memory of selling various scrolls to two mithril ranked adventurers' groups which were sure they would encounter large groups of enemies.

Still, she didn't understand the purpose of the giant ass-kissing of a letter she was reading. Sure, it was pretty obvious that they wanted to open commercial relationships with Satoru, but what was the purpose of being so... submissive? Certainly, being courteous was a thing but this was far too much for a simple commercial request considering they weren't even dealing with a noble but a common, even if talented, magic caster. The other option was that they were truly desperate, but that was unlikely. If the situation was really that bad, other nations would have come to help... right? No one wants to have Beastmen at their border. 'Something to be investigated for the future' she thought, storing that idea in the back of her mind.

Her eyes returned to the elegant handwriting.

This missive was sent in hope of finding a common point upon which we could forge a bilateral, beneficial, commercial relationship. We would like to propose that you to become the primary magical items supplier for our army.

Of course, we are aware of the impervious Katze Plains that separates our nations, which would make a possible safe route hard to establish. For that reason, we would gladly lift the importation taxes for your goods.

We would be glad to send an emissary to discuss a commercial treaty in full details.

We thank you again for your time and await with trepidation your answer.

Best regards,

Queen Draudillon Oriculus, Dark Scale Dragon Lord and current ruler of the Draconic Kingdom.

As Hilma finished reading the letter she could feel a minor headache rising inside her skull.

This was, of course, something she could not decide alone. Before making any move, she will have to consult with Satoru, but before using one of her scrolls she would like to evaluate the situation. There was no way she would waste Satoru's time. There was already a lot on his hands considering who followed him to the empire.

She could only shudder at the thought of that young imp princess following Satoru around like a lost puppy. Even if she came to respect the girl and even appreciate her mind, Hilma could not deny her twisted nature. Their sessions of female-to-female discussions often diverged toward the most... carnal acts of the relationship too. It seemed that the little devil seemed to have a certain fascination with the act itself.

If she didn't know Satoru's nature, she would have advised him to stay away from the girl but since he seemed the only one who actually had a glimmer of control over her, it would be better for them to remain together. And speaking more frankly... Hilma would prefer not to earn the ire of the younger princess. She was

sure that given enough time the girl would make the Eight Fingers seem tame in comparison.

As she tried to push back those unpleasant thoughts, she concentrated once more on the matter at hand.

If they accepted the proposal they would become the official backers of the Draconic Kingdom's army, and while that would bring them great prestige around the whole continent and not just the Re-Estize Kingdom, the negative points were hard to ignore.

First and foremost, their business would escalate to a multi-country level and that would involve politics, something her and Satoru tried to avoid in the past, which was greatly helped by Satoru's position among the Merchant Guild. If ever the relationship of Re-Estize and the Draconic Kingdom went south or stretched, the Sorcerer's Shop would be in the middle of the battleground, being subjected to unwanted attention by both countries.

The second big problem would be the transportation of the goods themselves. The Katze Plains were no playground, and to pass through the entirety of it while transporting valuable items would be quite the task. Even if they employed the best Seven Hands had to offer, she wasn't sure if the errand would be worth the risk.

And finally, the third great problem was the goods themselves. While she had no doubt that they had an abundance of spare items, that number was not even near enough to the actual quantity they would have to provide the army with. If they wanted to embark on this ship, her and Satoru will have to come up with another source of production for magical items.

These three big problems were the main points of discussion she would bring up with Satoru. But before she could even begin to organize her thoughts, she heard someone knocking at her door. That should have been impossible; she was sure she closed the shop and Mato's best men patrolled the streets around it at all times of the day and night. If the intruder managed to pass them, it would mean that they were dangerous. She immediately glanced at the corner of the room where a spectral figure stood floating a few centimetres above the floor. The Wraith didn't even seem to recognize the threat. That may be a good sign in Hilma's mind. If worst came to be, the Wraith should be able to get a sneak attack on the intruder, ending them.

With that renewed assurance of her safety, Hilma's gaze returned to the door.

"Come in."

She said; since the invader had been courteous, she may as well return the favour. As the door opened, a hooded figure entered in the room, covered from head to toes with an heavy coat. It was impossible to discern even the gender of the person.

"Hilma, we have got problems."

The invader said with a familiar tone. Hilma immediately recognized it.

"Cocco Doll? What are you doing here?"

She asked surprised, as said man removed his hood.

"There is no time to waste, that's what I am here for!?"

The man said in a slightly panicked tone.

"What is happening?"

She inquired, as worry began to rise inside her. Cocco Doll was not someone easily frightened or with an inclination to panic, and to see him in that state could mean only that whatever he knew was very bad news for them.

The man just began to blurt out a lot of incoherent things about some nobles and rebellion.

“Cocco Dol! Calm down! Seat and speak!”

She immediately ordered with a stern tone; the man flinched at the harshness in her tone and immediately obeyed, sitting down.

“Now, calm yourself and tell me what is wrong. Don’t leave out any details!”

She ordered, as the man nodded, taking in a few deep breaths before speaking again.

“Four days ago, we had a client, a noble, who required one of our girls to warm his bed in his house... a new service we were trying out since many nobles are too lazy to go or don’t enjoy our establishments, and this also gifts us with more occasions to gather important information... and well... that girl heard something important apparently. Something so important that when she was caught, they decided to kill her on the spot.”

He began, as Hilma noticed the nervousness in his tone rise once more.

“They dumped the body in one of the lower districts... but she wasn’t dead and some new recruits found her and brought her back to us.”

He paused, trying to calm himself. Hilma waited patiently. The cause of Cocco Doll’s panic surely wasn’t the attempted murder

of a prostitute... he saw far worse without batting an eye during his time with Eight Fingers. No, the worse part was yet to come, she was sure of it.

“That same night some of those noble’s men attacked the girl’s brothel trying to set it on fire and making it seem like an accident... they were probably trying to cover for the death of the girl.”

He continued. That caught Hilma’s attention, to kill one girl was one thing but to try to cover it by burning down an entire establishment meant that whatever the girl overheard was far more important than she initially thought.

“What did the girl overhear there?”

She asked, but Cocco Doll just shook his head and continued with the calmest tone he could muster.

“Our men managed to avoid most damage and kill the soldiers who tried it but still... I was sure there was more to that story than just some noble trying to hide his misdeeds.”

He continued his story ignoring Hilma’s question to her irritation.

“I called in our best healers and finally got the girl healed up, but she would not wake up until this afternoon, this evening I came to speak with her and...”

The leader of the spy network department paused not knowing how to phrase his next words.

“They were planning t-to kill them...”

He finished. Hilma, finally having enough of his cryptic words, grabbed him by the shoulder forcing his eyes to link with hers.

“Who wanted to kill who!?”

She demanded; Cocco Doll gulped.

“T-the nobles of the Noble Faction, they want to kill the youngest prince a-and the king.”

As the man’s words doused the leader of Seven Hands, she felt an icy sensation crawl up her spine.

“W-when...?”

She weakly asked.

“Tomorrow... they said they had all their men in position already.”

As all the weight of the situation finally fell on Hilma’s shoulder, there was only one thing she could think in that instant. ‘fuck.’

{Arwintar’s Imperial Palace: Emperor’s private room}

{Fluder’s P.O.V.}

The most powerful human magic caster on the continent sat on an elegant chair in front of his young emperor, who had a rare grim expression on his face.

It has been just a day since the visit of the famous magic caster from the Re-Estize Kingdom but his emperor did not even speak a word about the encounter; something that quite unnerved the old magic caster since said young boy didn’t speak about anything else before said meeting.

Not to say that Fluder didn’t have his own thought to entertain himself with; his Talent never failed him before, but no matter how hard he looked at the masked magic caster, he could not see a shadow of magical potential in him. But that should have been impossible. The reports said that he used teleportation magic in front of the whole court of the Re-Estize Kingdom.

“So, gramps, are we just going to stare at each other or are we going to talk?”

Asked the annoyed voice of Jircniv as he sat up straight from his laying position on the sofa.

“It would be impolite of me to force a conversation on you, Your Highness.”

Replied the old magic caster. That earned a scoff and an half smile from Jircniv.

“And when, in your whole life, has politeness stopped you from reaching what you wanted?”

The emperor asked rhetorically in a mocking tone which Fluder responded to with a light chuckle of his own.

“Very few times.”

He said, continuing their little game.

“So, what do you think about that magic caster. Is he worthy to invest into? Should we... deal with him before he becomes a problem?”

The young boy inquired, resuming a more serious tone. The magic caster just stroked his long beard as he thought on how to phrase his answer.

“That magic caster is one of a kind... never before in my life had I seen someone not even showing a inch of magical potential through my Talent... it is like he does not possess any magic at all...”

As he said that the emperor’s eyes widened in surprise.

“Are you saying he is a farce? Was he really able to fool everyone?”

He asked with a mixture of shock and intrigue in his tone. Fluder shrugged.

“Not necessarily; there is always the remote possibility of him possessing some kind of magical item or even Talent that negates my own... or his whole supposed magical power is based around the use of various magical items; something, not as impressive as a 5th tier caster, but not to be underestimated nonetheless.”

The old sage said, as he pondered the two possibilities; the emperor fell in deep thoughts for a whole minute before speaking again.

“It is imperative we know where his power comes from. May it be though magical power or items, we cannot deal with a wild card like that otherwise.”

He said with a tone as hard as steel before his serious expression was replaced by a smirk.

“Say gramps, would you mind giving a tour of the academy to that magic caster and then... politely challenge him to a friendly spar?”

The emperor said in a lighter tone; immediately, Fluder grasped the genius behind those words. ‘If we have a magical exchange, no matter how small I will surely be able to deduce if he is truly capable of magic or just relying on hidden items... and even if he refuses, that would indicate a clear lack of confidence in his abilities and skills with magic...’

While not perfect, the plan was still solid and would gather information on the enigma that was the masked magic caster no matter the outcome.

“I think it would bring us no harm to try... I am very curious myself to discover the outcome of such a confrontation.”

Agreed the old sage; he thought about it since the day he heard of that magic caster. Who knew how much they could learn from each other? To say that he was pretty disappointed when he could not see a shadow of magic potential in him would be an understatement. But finally, he will be able to see what this caster has to offer.

Stopping his train of thought, his eyes returned to his surrogate grandson in front of him.

“Now that we have dealt with that, do you mind explaining to me what happened at that dinner that still haunts you today? I may have remained silent but my mind is not going senile yet.”

Inquired the bearded magic caster in curiosity. At his words the emperor’s facial expression morphed again, now giving off uncertainty and even a little bit of what seemed to be fear in his eyes.

“That girl...”

He muttered lowly.

“What about her? She is not a dimwit, but you aren’t either Jir. You should not be scared to find a peer-“

The magic caster was interrupted by his emperor.

“It isn’t a matter of minds gramps... those eyes... those eyes that... they do not belong to a human. That is no girl at all... she is a demon in disguise; there is no other way around it!”

The emperor finally exploded, surprising Fluder. He had never seen his boy so distressed as in that moment. Whatever that girl did to him unnerved him greatly.

“Is that so? Are you sure that it wasn’t a light game? Or a mind trick? I have seen nothing out of the ordinary in the girl apart from her little wit game.”

The emperor gulped and remained silent. Seeing his surrogate grandson take his words to heart, he just patted him on the shoulder and left the room. ‘You are still a green boy, Jir. To be so frightened by a quick-witted child... oh well, boys will be boys I guess...’ the old man thought as he walked down the castle’s corridors, after all, he had a tour to arrange.

{Arwintar}

{Renner P.O.V.}

If there was something Renner missed during the last few months, it was the times she managed to be alone with her Satoru. And the funniest thing was that she didn’t even realize it until now.

At the moment, Lakyus was out training with either Gazef Stronoff or Brain Unglaus, possibly both, while she was alone with Satoru in his room. She felt that familiar warmth engulf her insides and burn without any restraint. Her whole body shrugged before she decided to lay against Satoru, who sat next to her on the large bed in his robe. She embraced his arm with her tiny ones and rested her head on the side of his torso.

Her beloved patted her head with his giant gloved hand making her whole body squirm with joy inside.

She closed her eyes as she wished that moments like these could last for all eternity. To hell with the empires and kingdoms. To hell with humans and demi-humans. To hell with the living and unliving. The only thing she wanted was an empty world where she could enjoy the rest of eternity with Satoru. But unfortunately, she was no goddess and she knew her wish would not come to be.

The silence between them was filled with many concepts that didn't need words, or maybe could not even be expressed in words. It was in moments like these that she realized how much Satoru meant to her and what it would mean to lose him. She had no doubt that if she had returned to her dull and grey life before meeting Satoru, she would have jumped from the highest tower of the Ro-Lente's Castle.

To think that that dimwit of an emperor would try and steal her Satoru away from her... the guts! Oh well, she will see with her own eyes how much guts he has inside his belly if he tries something like that again.

She herself didn't know exactly what this emotion she was feeling was. She knew anger, even rage, but this sensation was different; as cold as ice but still negative and chaotic in nature. It seemed similar to envy, but different, nonetheless. It surely wasn't the envy she had for Hilma before knowing her true colours.

But that wasn't the only thought that pestered her mind these days; Satoru's words were an enigma for her too. What would be the end goal to make best of what she had? What did she have in the first place? She had little political power, being the last child

of the king and a woman as well. She had her mind, superior to anyone else, but to apply it at the best of its ability, she needed power she lacked. Well, she could ask Hilma for help but that wouldn't be making the best of what she had; that would be making the best of what Satoru had. Something, she had no doubt, Satoru was already doing.

But those were thoughts for another time. Now she just wanted to enjoy herself as much as possible before her small court returned.

As she began to feel dizzy and sleepy, the pillow that was her Satoru shifted, and then she heard one single word come out of him with his usual deep tone.

“What?”

She looked up at him confused and immediately noticed the strange position he was in. He was currently using his free hand to touch the side of his dark hood in a gesture she never saw before. In that moment, he turned toward her, probably attracted by her sudden movement. Blue orbs met the equally blue gems of his mask. And in that moment, Renner knew, something was wrong.

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

“Again!”

The harsh tone of Brain Unglaus echoed in the empty alley as a panting Lakyus stood up from the ground that she clearly just fell on.

Panting, she moved back into the small circle drawn on the ground. In an instant, she resumed her previous pose even as her legs continued shaking.

“Do not tremble, there is no point in the training otherwise.”

The blue haired man instructed with a hard tone. Lakyus gulped as she tried to stop her trembling legs. Once she finally managed to calm herself, she closed her eyes, trying to sense all the space around her body. Her teacher said that the secret was in becoming one with the sword, and to become one, you should be perfectly aware of the range it could reach and how it would move if you were just moving one of your limbs.

Her eyes snapped open and with a loud cry she swung her blade horizontally, but the sheer force of the strike was enough to make her lose balance and fall on the hard ground again.

“Your right foot was too forward. This is a powerful skill and the sheer force of it, once you mastered it, would be enough to break your own limbs if you are not perfectly positioned to share the power’s recoil on your whole body.”

He explained, as Lakyus picked herself up once more.

This was so different from Gazef’s training, but she couldn’t deny how much she was improving thanks to this regimen. At the end of the day, her whole body would hurt like hell, but this was the life of someone who aspired to become the strongest swordswoman of the kingdom.

‘Speed and strength... once I master both of those arts, I will certainly reach the top. To change the world power is a necessity... Renner said so, and after looking at the emperor and my teachers I can only agree... this is the way to power. To struggle, fall and get hurt... I will not be like my fellow nobles. I will not be complacent. I will not bask in the glory of my name. I will not hide behind false power... I will reach the top and I will

change the world!' she proclaimed in her head as a new surge of power burned inside her, as her determination steeled.

{Gazef's P.O.V.}

Gazef looked at his young apprentice as she picked herself up from the ground and resumed her training. To say he was impressed would be an understatement. That girl of 11 years of age was training like an adult soldier with the iron will of a battle-hardened warrior. Under a certain point of view, it was almost terrifying; with that kind of determination, he was sure she could achieve anything.

The training regimen was brutal. Even more so for such a young girl. He would not normally agree on it, but the results were undeniable. In a little less than a month, the girl before him became such a skilled and precise swordswoman, he had no doubt that even with her lack of strength due to age she could defeat any Royal Army's soldier that wasn't an elite through sheer skill and mastery of the sword.

"Are you sure she will be okay?"

He finally asked in a low tone while approaching Brain, so that Lakyus would not notice him and get distracted.

"Yes. To achieve greatness, you must first break down something to its basic components, then improve them and reforge them into something greater."

The blue haired ex-swordsman said, as his eyes didn't leave Lakyus' form for even a moment.

"Do you believe she could do it?"

Asked Gazef, as he focussed on the other man's eyes in search of any sign of doubt. This time, Unglaus turned toward him and scowled.

“Are you mocking me, Stronoff? With the amount of potential that girl possesses, she will dwarf us in terms of skill when she will be 16... I never saw such raw potential in my whole life, not even in myself. She will go far... and there is no one else I want to leave my skills to but her.”

He concluded in a sad tone. Gazef was surprised by the sudden outburst. Even more since he never heard Brain compliment someone. He didn't expect the man to have it in him to admit such a thing.

“Why do you belittle her struggles then? Why do you try to make her feel inadequate, as if she wasn't enough?”

The Warrior-Captain asked, curious about the answer; the blue haired man glared at him with what seemed to be a mixture of sadness and anger.

“So that she will not become complacent of her own power... so that she may succeed as a swordswoman and a warrior... so that she does not commit the same error as-“

The man immediately stopped as he realized what he was saying. The fire of anger disappeared from his eyes, leaving only sadness. Silence reigned once more between them as the only sound in the alley was Lakys' training. The ex-swordsman turned.

“We are done for today! Clean up and meet me tomorrow morning!”

He finally barked out as he walked away from Gazef and a confused Lakys.

Gazef found no joy in the state his fellow swordsman fell into. He didn't mean to break him so, even if in the moment he didn't have any other choice. 'But to achieve greatness you must first break down' he repeated Brain's own words in his mind. In that moment, only a question haunted his mind. Could the man walking away from him really be reforged?

{Raeven Mansion}

{Elias Brandt Dale Raeven's P.O.V.}

The Marquis sat behind his desk as his spy relayed the daily news to him. His face remained stoic. There was no need to smile apart from when exchanging pleasantries after all.

"They moved faster than I thought. Are you sure no one noticed anything?"

He inquired in a dull tone, as if discussing some boring daily affair.

"Yes, my Lord. The Royal Faction is totally unaware. Even if some members of the Noble Faction have caught on to something, they don't seem too keen on intervening."

The spy replied. 'As expected,' thought the Marquis.

"Very well, you may leave."

Raeven dismissed his man. As soon as he heard him leave the room, his mind immediately focussed on the current situation.

The rebellion was something he would have liked to postpone by two or three years, but this was truly a golden occasion. The Warrior Captain was far away. The lack of a good harvest caused famine to begin, raising the discontent of the people even more

and, even more importantly, every head figure of the Kingdom was currently in the city.

This was the perfect storm, and while he was pretty influential as one of the Six Great Nobles, he was not influential enough to take the throne for himself. Alas, why... a momentary period of chaos would be needed.

It has been fairly easy to push the most radical nobles toward a rebellion. Leave some seeds here and there... let your lips loose for a moment... divulge what seemed to be useless details to certain people... makes some jokes... and voilà, a rebellion was on its way.

And the best thing was, he would have to do nothing at all, while his name remained totally clean!

Of course, he was already aware that the rebellion would be stomped out as soon as it started, but that was not the point. He just needed for the current king to be taken out of the picture.

That way, the throne would be inherited by the first prince, a stupid oaf without any charisma or brains for the position. In just a year or two both nobles and common people will be frustrated with his poor and harsh rule.

In that moment, he would come in, whispering in the right ears of the Royal Faction that the second prince may be more fitting for the throne. And once Zancor got some support, he will immediately go to the support of the first prince, now king, and tell them some interesting stories about a possible rebellious second prince.

Knowing the imbecile, he would immediately march against his own brother as soon as some evidence was provided. This would cause an open war dividing the Royal Faction into two.

That would be the perfect moment for him to finally take his place as the leader of the Noble Faction, and with their united might, finally crush the two princes, worn out by their own conflict. But to make a good claim for the throne, he would need to marry one of the King's daughters... the second was unmarried, a good coincidence.

A little smile appeared on the Marquis' face as his plan came together in his mind.

He always knew what people said when his back was turned. They thought him weak for not choosing to align with the Royal or Noble faction, but they were fools. All of them.

'Why should I align with one part and close any relationship with the other one? I much preferred to stay in the middle and be the friend of all, a trusted informant, a good comrade... and when they least expect it, I will stab them all in their backs!' he thought with mild satisfaction.

In two years, he would become king and there was nothing that would stop him. His reign was close and his prize closer than ever.

A.N.

Bet you didn't expect that! Admit it! You all thought you would not see him for some time, didn't you, but best papa Rae-tan will not let this occasion slip from his hands!

Now, I'm really interested in reading your thoughts, so leave a review with your idea of what will happen next, or just your

opinion on the chapter or anything really. A review is still a review!

Once again, thank you for reaching the amazing 1000 goal! I love you all and I hope to come back soon for more of this story that I love writing!

Till next time! Stay safe!