

# Bad Bet

*Written by "Ina Izumi"*

Emma, in her twenties, was a noble daughter of a feudal lord, named Otis, of the Principality of Schatzenberg, a small town in the middle of the mountains, in the mountain range known as the Nivium Mountains, in the north of Ardeal, where usually there are usually few interesting things to do. She likes to go through the wide roads of the city in her carriage, looking for something interesting to do in the city, even though usually the things to see in the city are pretty boring once you seen them, the most interesting thing Emma saw during the week was a puppet play even though it didn't particularly catch her attention.

On the other hand, Emma was alone most of the time, since her mother died when she was very young and her father is all the time with her younger brother, because even if Emma was born as the firstborn of the feudal lord, being a woman, because of the times, it was not possible for her to accede to the throne, so the feudal lord invests all his time in educating in the arts of politics and governance to his younger brother, Norbert, whom Emma hates deeply because his mother died in childbirth of Norbert by some strange complication, so Emma most of the time cannot even see his brother.

In general, therefore, except when Emma goes around the city looking for how to kill boredom, she is most of the time locked up in her palace mistreating her servants and playing games of chance, especially cards, forcing her employees to bet everything, even their freedom itself, while she did not bet anything, being something very unfair to her vassals, but being her vassals could not refuse, and even Emma used to put as a price for losing in a game of chance, since her vassals had already lost everything in front of her, She had the right to give her twenty lashes for no reason, even if she still kept her clothes, because for Emma it is wrong for her vassals to be marked for life, since she would feel disgust for them when she forces them to play sexually with her, because by that time she already had a very scandalous sexuality and used to play sexually with both men and women, even though no one in town has learned her secrets since her personal vassals cannot leave her palace, and no one from outside can normally enter. One could even say that the vassals of that palace are born in there and die in there, as if they were Emma's property or toys, being that vassalage practically a form of slavery disguised as something less cruel, even though for Emma it is quite functional that way, by forbidding her vassals to live in the palace and not being able to leave it, nobody will find out about her dark secrets, something that would do great damage to her family's reputation.

In the same sense, Emma was a big fan of gambling, as she was struck by how people even in normal conditions used to bet everything, even their freedom sometimes, in order to feel again and again more and more adrenaline. Emma believed that gambling and betting were even something magical, although she is disappointed that most of the gambling and betting games are usually played underground because they are illegal, or in her palace in the eyes of very few people.



YES! VICTORY IS MINE! TIME TO PAY UP, MY PRETTIES, HAHAHA!

OH NO! NOT AGAIN!---



I LOVE GAMBLING, ESPECIALLY WHEN I WIN AND THUS HAVE AN EXCUSE TO FORCE MY VASSALS TO DO EMBARRASSING THINGS.

UNFORTUNATELY I CAN ONLY ENGAGE IN CLANDESTINE GAMES, OR PLAY IN THE DARK CORNERS OF THE PALACE.

I FINALLY CONVINCED MY FATHER, THE FELIDAL LORD, TO LEGALIZE CASINOS, BUT WE SEE SO LITTLE TRADE THAT NO ONE MAY BOTHER TO OPEN ONE---

MMMMPH!!

One more seemingly ordinary day in Emma's life, while she was riding in her carriage at dusk looking for something interesting in the city, as usual and something that has become tedious and routine at times, because of the unchanging quietness of the streets, she finally found something that especially caught her attention.

It seemed that a stranger had arrived in the city, even though she seemed to be someone sinister at first sight, because of her huge black wings, something not very common even if in those domains the existence of magical beings is relatively common. Besides that, that stranger had infinitely red eyes, which even seemed to glow, and an unusual dress with a huge top hat on her head, which partially covered the deep black hair of the stranger, something also unusual there since in Schatzenburg most people were blonde or brown. On the other hand, besides it being clearly noticed that that winged woman was an outsider by her appearance, it also used to be a particularly rare thing for any visitor from outside to come to the fief, since the fief was very difficult to access, being in the middle of a mountain range and far away from sea level, and in Schatzenburg there is usually no attraction nor is it a target of military or commercial interest, so there is not much reason to go there from the outside.

However, she understood a little about the situation when that woman saw her and addressed her, something also unusual since the vassals are usually forbidden to speak directly to someone of the nobility of the fief, even though probably that woman, besides not being a vassal of the fief, does not know the customs of this one. On the other hand, what that woman said when addressing Emma was something even more curious, like "Huhh! You look like you like gambling, do you want to know my new casino? The inauguration is today!"

Emma, puzzled by the fact that the stranger realized just by seeing her that she liked gambling and games of chance, also understood quickly that this woman was the first to come interested in founding a casino after Emma, a few weeks ago, got her father, the feudal lord, to approve the existence of casinos in Schatzenburg, although she did not understand how that stranger found out about the legalization of gambling in such a remote place, if the news sometimes took months to enter or leave the fief. Because of that and because that woman guessed her taste for gambling, Emma thought that the winged woman might be a witch, but without worrying so much about that fact, she accepted the invitation of that winged woman, even without knowing her name, because she wanted to see how a real casino worked, since she only knew about casinos from what she had read in books. On the other hand, if that stranger had the economic capacity to build a casino, she would surely be a noblewoman or a wealthy bourgeois from some other fief or kingdom, so she sensed that she should be someone who could speak to her. The winged woman indicated Emma to follow her towards her casino, which Emma also accepted with pleasure.

THE NEXT DAY

SIGH, ANOTHER BORING DAY IN TOWN... HUIHH, WHO'S THAT? AN OUTSIDER?

YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WHO ENJOYS GAMES OF CHANCE! A NEW CASINO HAS JUST BEEN ESTABLISHED, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT WE OFFER?

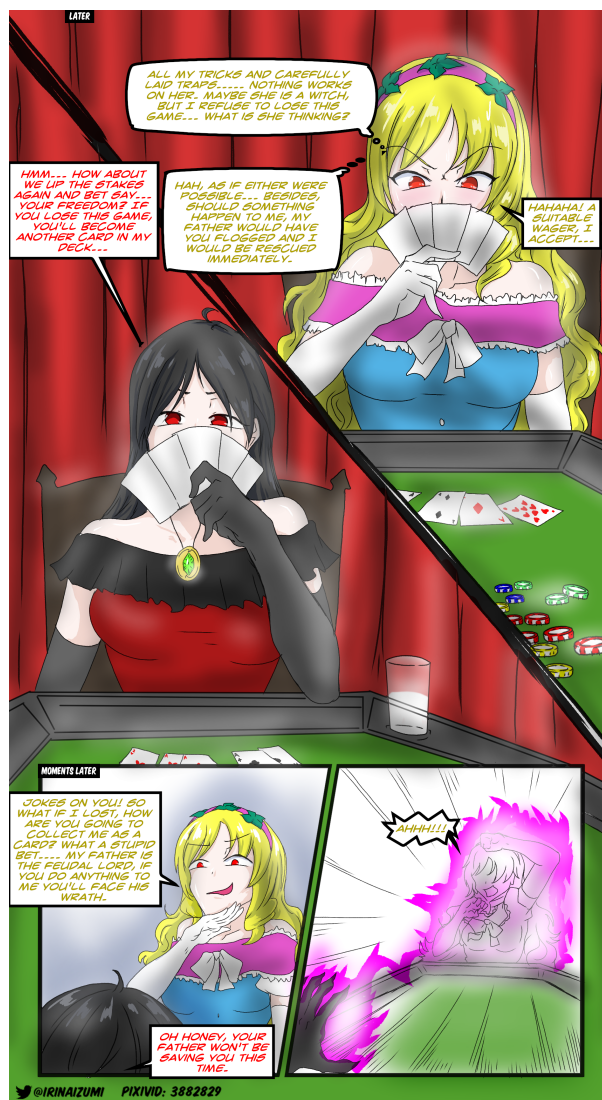
HOW DID SHE KNOW I LIKE TO GAMBLE? COULD SHE BE A WITCH? PLUS, HOW DID SHE FIND OUT ABOUT THE LEGALIZATION SO QUICKLY? NEWS DOESN'T TRAVEL THAT FAST BETWEEN TOWNS... STILL, I DO LOVE A GOOD GAME, AND SHE SEEMS TRUSTWORTHY.)

ALRIGHT, LEAD THE WAY!

YOU WON'T BE DISAPPOINTED!

After the winged woman showed Emma a long tour of the casino and its surroundings in a forest near Schatzenberg, Emma and the winged woman were finally engaged in a fierce game of cards. It seems that they are both very good at playing poker. Even Emma, knowing many secrets and ways to cheat, never seemed to work against the winged woman, as the stranger always anticipated her moves. Finally, to further heighten the tension in that Poker game, just before what seems to be the last move for the two of them, the winged woman bet everything on the table, by offering Emma that, if Emma wins that game, she and her casino would belong to Emma, as a vassal and a property, while if Emma lost, the winged woman could claim Emma as a card in her deck.

Emma, excited by the seriousness of the bet, could not help but laugh at the absurdity of what Emma would have to bet, while the winged woman was betting everything and herself, which made Emma think that the winged woman was another hardened gambler who does not mediate the risks of her actions, while Emma was not risking anything since how would Emma join the winged woman's deck as a card? If Emma is not a card, besides even if she really were a witch that outsider, if she did anything to Emma she would get into serious trouble with the feudal lord, Emma being the feudal lord's daughter. So, Emma, without fear of success, accepts the bet without hesitation.



Then they both make their final move and, finally, Emma loses. This only causes Emma to stand up laughing out loud, then asking the stranger if she would now turn her into a card or something else absurd, to which the stranger replies, bluntly and seriously, that that was what Emma agreed to bet on, so yes. Suddenly the winged woman snaps her fingers and a huge cloud of smoke surrounds Emma, immediately startling her.

After that Emma finds herself breathing heavily and strangely excited by the confinement and how tight she feels it is that place where she is apparently trapped. Emma wonders where she is or what has happened, having a bit of amnesia after what happened, she even tries to move but is not very successful, as if her body is trapped in some more or less flexible but suffocating place, even though for some reason she doesn't seem to need to breathe to live or remain conscious somehow in that suffocating, tight and exciting place.

In the meantime, that winged woman stares smilingly at Emma, who is now in her hand, as part of a new card to her deck of cards composed of other losers.

