

“Normal speech”

‘Thought’

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

**Howdy! I bet some of you didn't expect to see me so soon. Well, I bring with me both good and bad news. Starting with the good one! The chapter is here earlier than expected and this is the last chapter before we enter the Empire (this time is true I swear!). The bad news is that I'm going on a vacation with my family, so no new chapters before mid-July at least, more likely late July.**

**Oh well, what can we do? I mean, I just go on a vacation once a year, so I hope you will forgive me. That said, enjoy the early chapter!**

**Also, I saw some reviews say that there were spelling errors. If you notice any, I would be glad if you pointed them out in your review so I can fix them! Thank you!**

**Beta Reader/Editor: SirWertsalot (Thank you, ZeroSenpai, for providing the manuscripts to me. Proofreading and editing a fanfiction that is almost the length of a light novel is far more taxing than I imagined it would be. That being the case, I hope all of you appreciate the fixes I've applied to each of the chapters! Please continue to show your support in the form of Follows and Reviews!)**

Chapter 14: Nobles, Cardinals and Dragons

Satoru entered the elegant room, followed by the innkeeper. A delicately carved wooden table stood in the middle of the room. On one side, there sat one of the fattest men Satoru ever saw, and next to him stood two high ranking guards judging by their decorated armours.

On the other side of the table, someone prepared an elegant chair for him or at least that was what he deduced from the situation.

“Ah, finally! Welcome, Sir Satoru!”

Said the fat man who was probably the city Mayor; Satoru lightly bowed his head to him.

“Thank you for the hospitality, Lord Rettenmaier.”

Greeted back the undead magic caster.

“Please, please, have a seat!”

Invited the noble amicably. Satoru did so and sat on the chair while trying to not place his full weight on it; after all, while beautiful, the chair also seemed extremely frail.

“I must apologize for calling you here so suddenly after your arrival, but I was not sure how long your visit in E-Rantel would last.”

The mayor explained as he took a sip of wine from his elegant crystal chalice.

“How rude of me, may I offer you some wine?”

He asked, indicating the half empty bottle currently on the table with his eyes.

“No, thank you, Lord Rettenmaier. I do not usually partake in wine, even less so when I’m on a business trip.”

Satoru explained, his inner salaryman screaming at him in frustration. After all, it was well known that alcohol helped to ease tense situations and brought people together, however, Satoru could not drink it with his current body, illusion or not.

“How strict. No wonder you have been so successful in just a year. Both your magical talent and self-control must have played a primary role in that.”

The mayor continued as he took another sip from his chalice.

“Probably. Discipline has been a key aspect of my upbringing. It is well rooted in my mind by now.”

Satoru said, before lightly tapping on the table.

“Well then, may I ask why you are here, Lord Rettenmaier?”

The mayor downed the remaining wine from his chalice before laying it on the table.

“Please leave us.”

He ordered. The innkeeper immediately bowed and left the room; the two guards seemed to hesitate but ultimately obeyed without questions and left after the innkeeper, closing the door behind them.

“Well then. First, I would like to welcome you once more to E-Rantel. It is a pleasure to have such an esteemed guest in my city.”

The Mayor began; Satoru nodded.

“Unfortunately, this isn’t a simple pleasure visit. You see, Sir Satoru, I have overseen this city for decades by now and trust me, it hasn’t been easy.”

Satoru didn’t respond, curious about where the man was going with his speech.

“We are a frontier city. The initial purpose of E-Rantel, before it became the city it is today, was to be the first line of defence against any attack coming from the east.”

He continued. Satoru nodded. He already guessed as much by himself.

“It took a lot of time to balance our economy and find a way to sustain ourselves without having to rely on commerce from more central cities. We may be one of the richest cities in the Kingdom today, but it took many generations to reach this point.”

He explained before pausing and taking a deep breath.

“Ever since your decision to expand your business here, our economy became very... unstable to say the least. The flow of money changed, being directed far more towards your shop and a great deal less to other fields. I already overheard that the Magician Guild in E-Rantel is thinking about following the example of the one in the capital instead of opposing you.”

The noble explained ‘is this city... a smaller version of Japan?’ the magic caster wondered to himself.

“I think I see what the problem is.”

Interjected Satoru.

“Your economy is very stable as long as the coins continue to circulate among yourselves, of course there is still some

importation and exportation, but you made sure to balance it so that your inner economy would not be ruined.”

He surmised. The noble nodded.

“But I am becoming a problem now since I suck a lot of your money away from the city and am not reinvesting here in E-Rantel. This will cause your perfectly balanced inner economy to collapse. There will be no more money circulating in your city and people will not be able to sustain their lives anymore.”

He deduced; the noble nodded in confirmation.

“This of course could be balanced with a further taxation. It would not solve the problem, but it would minimize the damage.”

The Mayor explained.

“Why didn’t you do so then?”

Asked the magic caster.

“I knew Count Lynet. He was always a greedy man. The second he learned about you opening up a shop in his city, he tripled the taxes on magical items...and after a month, he was found dead outside his burning estate, butchered alongside his family. He had two twin daughters, both 5 at the time... both were suffocated by forcing cooper coins down their throats... a macabre message of some sort I think...”

The Mayor said, his eyes fixed on Satoru’s mask.

“Are you trying to imply something here Lord Mayor? Wasn’t it already clarified that the perpetrators were from the group known as Seven Hands?”

Satoru asked; he was sure his body would be tensing up if he had any muscle.

“Of course not, Sir Satoru. I was just pointing out how horrible things tend to happen to Nobles who raise their taxes these days.”

Silence descended in the room; by now Satoru was sure that the man before him was no fool, like many of those nobles he met in the capital were. No, the fat man before him was a sly fox who knew well how the world worked.

“While I find your opinions concerning, I still think I may have a different solution to your current problem.”

Satoru said, breaking the silence. He must thank his undead nature again for gifting him with such a cold mind in these situations, where his previous self would surely panic.

“And what would that be?”

Asked the Mayor with interest in his eyes.

“A form of investment. On my side, I will do what I can to reinvest the money I gain back into this city, but at the same time I would require certain... liberties to operate as I please in a certain area.”

Satoru explained. The Mayor didn't respond immediately as he slowly grabbed the bottle of wine and began to pour some into his chalice. As soon as he filled it, he looked at Satoru once more before giving him a feral smirk.

He grabbed his chalice and raised it as much as his fat, short arm could afford.

“A toast! To a prosperous and rich business venture!”

He said before downing the wine.

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

When she returned to her room in the elegant inn, her legs were barely able to sustain her weight. She never felt so tired in her life. Brain was not like Gazef. Her new teacher preferred perfection and could only accept so much failure before snapping.

But even if her training was hard, in just a few hours, she could already see some changes in her swordsmanship. Now her stance allowed her to strike faster and block incoming attacks without having to shift her position.

Her new teacher described her movements and style as brutish and unrefined. 'You must be able to move as if your body was made of water. Fighting is a deadly dance and those who misstep lose their heads,' she remembered Brain's words clearly.

When she reached her room, the sun was already gone from the sky, and she wanted nothing more than to lie on her bed and sleep forever.

As expected, Renner was already there when she entered the room, but Lakyus was done for the day and had no remaining strength even for basic curtsies, not that the third princess ever cared for such things.

"Oh, Lakyus. I was beginning to get worried about you. I didn't see you for the entire day. Where were you?"

Asked the princess in her usual sweet tone.

"Training."

She curtly answered.

"With Gazef?"

The princess inquired.

“No... Brain Unglaus...”

The young swordswoman clarified. Renner gave her a surprised look.

“Oh... I didn’t expect that... I guess my hunch was true then... you are really into older men... Satoru, Gazef and now Brain... I don’t think I’ve ever seen you with a boy your age, not that I am one to judge.”

The princess said. Even in her tired state, Lakyus’ cheeks flushed red at the implication.

“N-N-NO! I-I just wanted to learn! I just wanted to get better!”

If she wasn’t so tired, Lakyus might have shouted those words, but in her current state, her words came out like a weak excuse.

“Hold your horses, I was just teasing you.”

The princess assured her. Lakyus groaned.

“Oh, and Lakyus.”

The princess said to attract her attention once more. The young noble turned her gaze on the third princess, who now had a hand over her mouth and nose.

“Go take a bath. You stink like the Capital’s sewers.”

At those words, Lakyus only groaned louder as she dragged her body toward the bathroom.

{Two days later}

Gazef was helping Satoru in finishing preparing the cart when Lakyus and Renner showed up.



“Just a few minutes and we will depart.”

Announced Gazef. He jumped onto the cart while Satoru secured it to his Golem Horse.

Lakyus helped Renner get onto the cart before jumping up herself. She looked one last time at the city. This would be the last of the Kingdom she would see until they returned. It was her first time going out of the kingdom. She felt excited, but at the same time, scared at the idea of going so far away from home.

She shook her head. She knew she needed this. She must remain strong because this was all for her goal.

“Hey brat, where are you going?”

Asked a voice she knew well by now. She turned her head left, only to see Brain, her second teacher, standing next to the cart.

“Ah... uhm... the Empire...”

She said with uncertainty. Brain just sighed and looked at Gazef.

“OI! Stronoff! Care if I join in?”

Asked the blue haired martial artist; the Warrior Captain looked surprised.

“I don’t have anything against it. I heard you helped Lakyus during these days in E-Rantel. May I ask why you want to come though?”

Gazef asked in a curious tone. Brain shrugged.

“I may have put down my sword, but I see talent in that kid. I can’t just let you ruin her with all those unrefined movements you are teaching her. It would be a true shame to see that

potential wasted... also, I am trying to find a new starting point for my life. I may as well look in the Empire.”

He explained; Gazef nodded.

“I understand, but the decision is not really mine to make. What do you say, Satoru?”

Gazef asked the silent magic caster, who didn't answer immediately. His face may have been hidden, but, by now, Lakyus recognized the aura around him. He was pondering the pros and cons of the decision.

“Please Satoru!”

She begged him, hoping to convince him to accept. The magic caster took a deep breath before sighing.

“Very well. You may come, but you are not allowed to use any blade during our trip.”

He said firmly. Brain just shrugged.

“I already put aside that life. I just want to pass down what I know about the blade so that someone may have a better use for it.”

He said as he got onto the cart. A few minutes later, they departed. Their destination, this time, was the heart of the Empire, Arwintar.

{Slane Theocracy: Hall of the Six}

{Raymond's P.O.V.}

Raymond Zarg Lauransan was a man in his late 30s with brown hair and beard and a keen eye. He was also the Cardinal of Earth and the youngest Cardinal at the moment. Nevertheless, he was

also in charge of the Six Scriptures, the most elite troops that the Theocracy had at its disposal.

After 15 years of service in the Black Scripture, he was deemed worthy of the position of Cardinal after the previous one passed away. In only a few years since his new appointment, he was deemed worthy of commanding the Six Scriptures as a whole. The reason behind this decision was twofold. First, he was a previous member of a Scripture and had military experience. Second, and most important, was his calm and reasonable approach to all kinds of situations.

Right now, he sat at a table with the other Cardinals. They already had a meeting with the rest of the Council that same day where they discussed the most pending political and military matters. This additional meeting between the Cardinals wasn't something that normally happened but by now Raymond had gotten used to this kind of last-minute meetings.

“So, is there any news from your investigations, Raymond?”

Asked Berenice, the Cardinal of Fire and the only female Cardinal. Raymond shook his head.

“No, nothing more than what we already knew from the previous meeting.”

He grimly replied. The disappearance and probable demise of the entire Sunlight Scripture has been a concerning and alarming event since a year before.

Many investigations were launched to discover what happened to them, but nothing came of it. At the time, the Sunlight Scripture was going on a routine mission to exterminate as many undead as they could around the Katze Plains. This was done to

avoid any possible gathering of negative energy and stop the subsequential birth of any powerful undead like Death Knights or Elder Liches.

Since it was a routine mission, they weren't being monitored by the Thousand Miles Astrologer who was busy monitoring the elves at that specific moment.

They initially thought that it could have been the work of a legendary undead, but that option was quickly dismissed. It would have been highly impossible for a single undead to exterminate a whole Scripture. Even a legendary Death Knight would have not been able to prevent the escape of some members.

The fact that they didn't even manage to locate the bodies was also proof that whoever did it was intelligent enough to know someone would come to check.

Raymond deduced that this was the doing of an unknown party. He couldn't see it any other way. The question was, who were they? And why did they attack a Scripture? It has been a year and nothing else happened that would indicate this unknown party moving in the shadows.

“That magic caster in the Kingdom is involved, I tell you!”

Spat Yvon, the Cardinal of Light; Raymond sighed ‘here he goes again...’ he thought in exasperation. Seeing that no one was reacting to his comment, Yvon continued.

“The scripture disappears and then, a few weeks later, this powerful magic caster appears out of nowhere! This is too suspicious!”

He continued; Raymond looked him directly in the eyes.

“I already told you Yvon, I investigated that magic caster, and nothing came out of it, he is powerful and cunning but other than that, he has no contacts outside the Kingdom and has not moved against the church or government.”

Raymond said again, calmly. The arcane magic caster known as Satoru has been a hot topic at their table for several meetings by now. Most of the Cardinals were in favour of recruiting such a formidable asset. All apart from Yvon who, for some reason, was convinced the magic caster was involved in the Sunlight Scripture investigation.

“I already told you; other than the timing, which could be a coincidence, nothing indicates any motive for him to go and attack a Scripture out of the blue... and I doubt he would have been able to exterminate it so completely on his own, anyway; he may be a caster of the 5<sup>th</sup> tier, but that is not enough to deal with a group of 30 magic casters of the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier.”

He continued, trying to be reasonable. Yvon didn't answer but also didn't seem too convinced by his argument.

“Speaking of which... where is our talented friend now?”

Asked Dominic, the Cardinal of Wind. Raymond shifted his attention to him.

“I just received a report of him leaving for the Empire on a business trip... alongside the Third Princess and Gazef Stronoff.”

Said Maximilian, the Cardinal of Darkness. All the other Cardinals hummed.

“Why the princess though?”

Asked a confused Berenice. Raymond coughed, already knowing the answer.

“It seems like the princess... has taken a certain liking to the magic caster.”

Explained Maximilian.

“Wait... isn’t she around ten years old or so. Are you sure we are not talking about the second princess?”

Asked a concerned Berenice; Maximilian shook his head.

“No, I’m sure we are talking about the third princess... and she is 8 by the way.”

He said awkwardly. Berenice placed a hand on her face.

“Brats these days...”

She grumbled out.

“So, what are we going to do about this? This is a perfect occasion to plunge the Kingdom into chaos and prepare it for the annexation to the Empire, thus creating a united human front as we planned.”

Intervened Ginedine, the Cardinal of Water, for the first time.

“No, for now I don’t think it would be wise to act.”

Raymond retorted, attracting the attention of the other Cardinals as he explained further.

“The ruling class of the Kingdom may be a disaster, but with the arrival of this magic caster, the military forces of the two parties are fairly equal in power. An all-out war right now would only result in disaster for both nations. It doesn’t help that the

Emperor didn't go through with his purgation of the noble class in the Empire as we hoped."

He explained; some of the Cardinals hummed in agreement with his points.

"Why hasn't he done that anyway?"

Asked Yvon, who seemed genuinely curious.

"He is wary of the newfound power of the Kingdom. Presently, magic items and equipment are available in quantities never seen before in the Kingdom. The Emperor fears that as soon as he shows weakness, he will be attacked from the Kingdom."

Raymond explained. Yvon nodded to indicate his understanding.

"The best solution would be to wait and see who between the two of them show more potential and then help them to annex the other one."

The Cardinal of Earth concluded as everyone nodded in agreement with his proposal.

"Returning to our initial point, the Extra Seat heard what happened to the Sunlight Scripture and requested to meet with whoever is responsible for it once we found them."

Continued Raymond.

"Absolutely not! That girl is far too dangerous to be let near anyone!"

Protested Ginedine energetically.

"I know that. I just thought it would be a good thing to notify you about it."

Raymond Calmly continued.

“If the fools who made her this way were still alive... what a disgrace to the Theocracy’s name...”

Grumbled Ginedine. ‘Yes indeed, if they were still alive I would give them a piece of my mind...’ thought the Cardinal of Earth before the conversation drifted away towards calmer waters.

{Draconic Kingdom: Dark Scale Palace}

{Draudillon’s P.O.V.}

The Dragon Queen Draudillon Oriculus, also known as the Dark Scale Dragon Lord, sat on her throne. All around her ministers and generals were discussing the current state of the war.

It wasn’t the first time in history that the Beastmen tried to invade the Draconic Kingdom, but all previous wars have been very short lived. They usually managed to take one or two villages before they broke against the walls of the first city they encountered.

This wasn’t the case this time. This time they planned the invasion well. Usually, they had to deal with only one or two clans, but this time there were a lot more. They must have found a common point, somehow.

Still, no matter how they did it, the problem still remained; an army of Beastmen was currently marching through her Kingdom, pillaging and devouring villages.

Thanks to all their previous failed attacks, the Kingdom was fairly weakened, militarily speaking, and the looming threat of another invasion didn’t encourage people to advance technologically either. They were still a decade behind the rest of the continent by her estimations.



“My Queen, the Beastmen army has reached Almagda. As you instructed, we have stationed most of our troops there and we are using the fortified walls to try and stop them.”

One of the generals said.

“The Beastmen have tried to breach the walls but failed. We managed to repel them thanks to the aid of the adventurers we hired from the Re-Estize Kingdom. The report said that they bombarded the Beastmen with magic until they fled after sustaining great losses in numbers.”

Another general, who just returned from the front, announced. Everyone in the room was surprised by the news. No one thought that Almagda would stand a chance against such an army. All considered the walls too frail to hold the mass of Beastmen considering that each one of them had the strength of four humans.

“We spent even less in hiring them than those fuckers from the Theocracy. We may as well continue to hire adventurers.”

Commented a seasoned general with a white beard and a scar on his left cheek. It was true. They usually paid the Theocracy a great amount of money for them to send one of their scriptures, but this year, for some reason, they wouldn't lend their scriptures anymore, no matter how much they offered. In desperation, Draudillon ordered to hire adventurers from the Re-Estize Kingdom. The investment seems to have paid off quite well if you asked her.

“I didn't know the Re-Estize Kingdom had powerful teams of magic casters among their adventurers.”

Commented a minister.

“You are right. They are mostly melee warriors with few rangers and casters. The majority of the spells they used were from scrolls they brought from their country.”

The general explained, stunning many in the room.

“Scrolls you say? Aren’t those incredibly expensive? Who the hell did we hire for this job?”

Asked the minister of finances.

“11 gold teams, 6 platinum teams and 3 mithril teams.”

The general answered.

“This is impossible! Mithril teams I could understand but platinum or even gold? They are not able to afford such costly items.”

The minister retorted.

“They also all wore magical gear and used magical weapons.”

The general added, shocking the audience even more ‘what the fuck is happening?! The Re-Estize Kingdom despise magic. Where in the world did they find all that stuff!’ Draudillon thought in shock.

“General! It is imperative that we learn how all these adventurers came into possession of these items!”

She almost shouted as her crimson eyes latched onto the young general. He immediately turned toward her.

“My Queen, I already took the liberty of questioning them about it once the horde was repelled.”

‘then speak you fool!’ she thought in exasperation, gesturing for him to go on.

“Your Majesty, apparently around a year ago a powerful magic caster arrived in the Re-Estize Kingdom. His name is Satoru. No one knows from whence he came exactly, but he is rumoured to be proficient in 5<sup>th</sup> tier magic.”

The general began, then paused a moment as if to think on how to phrase his next statement.

“This man set up a shop for magical items and gears. His prices were incredibly low compared to the common prices the magician guild asked for and adventurers flocked to him like crows on a battlefield.”

The general continued before pausing again.

“In only a few months, the arcane magic caster known as Satoru became an important figure in the Merchant Guild. He also became vital to the Adventurer’s Guild since he basically equipped most of them, from their lower ranks to their highest. He also became the primary funder of the Magician Guild, which now produce magical items for him.”

The general continued his explanation to the speechless court.

“In the most recent months, he expanded his business all around Re-Estize, opening a shop in all the major cities with an Adventurer Guild. On a side note, I also heard that his procedure to create scrolls includes using monster’s hide and since the Adventurer’s Guild procures most of it for him, he offers further discounts for all adventurers. I have no idea if this applies to foreign adventurers as well.”

The general concluded. As soon as his mouth closed, Draudillon jumped up from her throne.

“We need to get in contact with this magic caster immediately! Someone, bring me paper and quill!”

She ordered. ‘no matter what, we must have this man for ourselves! Importation Tax-Free?! Giving him monster’s hide?! Marrying him?! I don’t care! As long as he gives us his support, I will gladly entertain him as much as he wants! I will no longer allow my people to suffer! No more widows! No more children eaten alive! I will stop this! No matter the cost!’ she thought as a new fire of hope burned in her crimson eyes.

‘Satoru... I wonder; what kind of man are you?’

{Arwintar: Lower District}

{???

A hooded figure stumbled into a dark alley, their walking pace was irregular, and they seemed to limp on their right side.

The figure almost fell to the ground when they stumbled on a bucket they didn’t seem to see. They managed to grab the wall and not fall.

‘Damn them! Damn them all! Traitors!’ they thought as they continued to advance through the alley, using the wall to sustain themselves.

‘I will not stop! I will not die! Not until I see them all burn in hell! This I swear, even if it is the last thing I do’ they cursed inside as they felt a wave of nausea surge from their stomach; they managed to hold their dinner in.

They were once a fierce warrior. Their skill with a blade was far superior to their peers, and now they were alone... abandoned by all they trusted, betrayed by their closest ones. They didn’t even

have the strength to roar in frustration anymore, so they limited themselves to groan.

They looked in a muddy puddle on the street. Oh, how their own reflection haunted them; they clawed at their face with both their hands in frustration. Now their hands were covered in a mixture of yellowish pus and red blood. The sight made them feel sick and this time they vomited all the contents of their stomach.

They didn't manage to move much more. After a few more meters, they fell against the wall. They felt their consciousness beginning to slip away. 'Please help me... anyone... save me...' they thought before losing their consciousness.

**A.N.**

**Well, what can I say? Next time we will reach the Empire. I hope you all enjoyed this vision of various factions around the continent. I read some of you were waiting for it.**

**As I already said, I'm going on a vacation, and I will not be able to write during that period. I can't wait to read all your reviews. I imagine you have a lot of stuff going through your mind now that I gave you a peek outside the kingdom.**

**Until next time! Review and stay safe!**