

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

**Yep, I'm here again with a new chapter, sorry if it seems like we are never getting to the dwarven arc, but I had to finalize a few things before that.**

**Still, hope everyone enjoys this one!**

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

### Chapter 43: The Climb commences

“[Cinder’s Rain]!”

“[Sparks]!”

The two young casters intoned their spells as the light of flames and lightning engulfed the small clearing they were using as a training ground.

“[Twofold Slash of Light]!”

The loud voice of the blonde swordswoman facing them outclassed their own as the two spells were immediately destroyed by the Martial Art she used.

“Damn it! That’s so unfair!”

Cried out the brown-haired boy as he collapsed on his arse, sweat pouring all over his face due to exertion.

“That was a magnificent execution, Lakyus, you are possibly the most promising prodigy I have ever saw using Martial Arts.”

The Warrior Captain, and the referee for the match, complimented the noble lady who was currently gasping for air as much as her opponents. The mental strain of using such taxing Martial Arts wasn't anything to scoff at either apparently.

A smile came over Rayne's face at the sight.

“Well, she at least didn't push us down on our asses easily this time, right Arche?”

He asked rhetorically as his fellow apprentice just huffed in a not so dignified way, making him smirk a little. He could not believe this sweaty and covered in mud girl was the same noble he met more than a year ago.

Said noble merely spared him a glance. Ever since they spoke a few weeks ago she had been on edge around him, ever since he proclaimed he would be her friend no matter what, she had tried to avoid him as much as she could. Which wasn't much as they trained, ate and slept together.

“No, that wasn't even near as precise as yours is master Gazef.”

Lakyus shook her head in denial to her teacher's praises.

“That might be true, but considering your age, it is already unthinkable you can use so many Martial Arts, not counting how some are extremely taxing on the body and mind.”

The older warrior countered her underplaying of her own abilities.

“I must concur with Gazef on this one, you three are certainly a gifted bunch, how knows, you might even surpass our generation before we even retire.”

The dark and deep voice of Rayne and Arche’s teacher attracted everyone’s attention. For all Master Satoru was an imposing man, as much as Gazef at least, he could be incredibly silent and sneaky when he wanted to, a fact that still baffled Rayne to this very day.

“We can certainly agree on that Satoru, damn by this rate I will have to step down from my position before I even reach fifty.”

The Warrior Captain added much to Lakyus’ embarrassment.

“Umu, indeed, we will have to step up our game to avoid these youngsters making fools out of us.”

The arcane magic caster indulged the swordsman as he took a few step forward until he was directly facing both of his apprentices.

“Rayne, Arche, I am greatly pleased with your current progress, and I think it is about time the two of you get the appropriate... gear to achieve even further greatness.”

At those words Rayne immediately stood up, all previous fatigue forgotten in the wake of such a declaration from his teacher.

Even Arche, silent as she had become during the last weeks, seemed baffled by their teacher’s words.

Without hesitation the older magic caster’s gloved hand disappeared into the void that hid so many untold mysteries and treasure which didn’t stop amazing Rayne to this day.

Just to seemingly further prove his point, the young caster’s eyes widened as his teacher extracted a couple of robes from the void.

He then proceeded to inspect them before offering them to his disciples.

“I think it is about time the two of you get some decent gear, it would be in poor taste on my part to supply Lakyus with some enchanted weapons while leaving my students with nothing.”

As soon as Satoru said those words, Rayne proceeded to almost snatch the offered robe from his hand as he eagerly inspected it, awestruck at the beauty of such a garment, he doubted even nobles would have something as beautiful as this in their wardrobes.

Now that he was touching the robes with his own hands he could not help but notice that it wasn't made out of any kind of material he knew of, no, it almost seemed like the whole thing was... scaly? A baffling turn of events he didn't imagine. Squinting his eyes, he could indeed see what seemed to be small dark blue scales composing the fabric of the gown. That would also explain why it was reflecting the sunlight like it was some kind of glass.

“Eager, aren't we? Ahahah...”

The words of his master brought Rayne back to reality as he blushed due to the embarrassment his previous actions caused him, fortunately his teacher seemed to be more amused than offended by his rude gesture.

“That is an enchanted robe made out of Thunder Wyverns' hide, it empowers all electricity-based spells and increase defense against this same element, the passive enchantment allow you to spend less magic for the casting of electric type magic while the active enchantment allow the user to increase their normal speed tenfold, allowing you to flee easily if necessary.”

Rayne's jaw was hanging loose at his master's words, there was no way he was receiving such an incredible and rare gift, this seemed like something only adamantite adventurers would be boasting about. Not in a thousand years would he have imagined he would ever get to touch such a thing, even less own it!

His shock must have shown on his face as his master just chuckled and turned to Arche, offering the other robe.

It was very similar to his own, only difference was the fact it was made out of some crimson red material instead of his dark blue.

“This is made out of Flame Salamander's hide, it is incredibly resilient against any fire, even if demonic in nature, and enhances all the wearer's flame base spells, the passive enchantment would make flame spells less costly in terms of magic while the active spells imbued within would allow the robe to catch fire becoming a shield around you.”

The empire's noble visibly gulped before gracefully accepting the gift, examining slack-jawed the robe now in her hands. If Rayne had to make a comparison, she looked like a fish out of water, not that he looked much better all considered.

“T-thank you... m-master Satoru.”

He barely heard his fellow apprentice speak those words as he wanted to punch himself once more for his rudeness.

“Thank you, m-master!”

He immediately proceeded to show his own gratitude, he didn't have the courage to look upon his master after such a shameless display of rudeness.

Silence reigned in the clearing for a few seconds before a quite loud chuckle shattered it. He felt a hand ruffling his hair fondly, just like his father used to do when he was younger, a quick glance to his left showed him that Arche received the same treatment.

“You are my students, part of the legacy I will leave in this world, what kind of teacher would I be if I didn’t ensure you had the best of the best?”

Rayne felt his eyes fill with tears. Only now he realized that his debt toward his master would never be fulfilled. If it wasn’t for him, he would still be ill stuck in his bed, or even dead by now. That was already hard enough to repay as it was. But his master did more, he took him under his wing and taught him, made him strong enough to protect those he loved. Without him he would have never met such wonderful people or made any friends at all.

That was not something he could hope to repay over ten lifetimes. If all his master asked of him was to make sure his legacy would be a worthy one, he would pour all his soul into achieving that goal. All the world will know the name of Satoru the magic caster and how he has been the greatest arcane magic caster to ever exist.

That he swore on his life and soul!

{Shasuryu’s P.O.V.}

To say Shasuryu had no words to explain what he was witnessing would be an understatement. If anyone told him of this he would have never believed it not even if that someone was his own brother.

It had been just a week since they launched out ranging groups of hunters and warriors toward the mountain and in doing so they used most of their resources. Satoru reassured them that he would

have no problem supporting them while their tribesmen were away and so the chiefs didn't worry as much.

The plan was initially to have all chiefs return to their villages but instead they decided to send others to relay their orders.

The reason was simple. They were distrustful, they thought that once most of their warriors left, someone would launch an assault on their villages and so they preferred remaining here to observe and ensure no strange moves were made.

Satoru, on his part, seemed quite content to leave to them the administration and decision making on how to carry out their end of the deal. That surely relieved most of the chiefs who had no intention to bow to external power.

The magic caster, instead, decided to dedicate himself to the production of resources like he initially promised.

According to Crusch, for all the human was an incredible magic caster, they would not see any results before a week. So, imagine the surprise when the very next day after his declaration the magic caster asked them to come and check out the results of his efforts.

What greeted them was an unreal sight.

A literal mountain of fish lied before them. It all the chiefs stood on each other he doubted they would have reached half the height of the pile, that was not to speak about its width.

To think such a thing was achieved in merely one night was unconceivable to imagine for any of them.

A single village could have lived off this pile for almost a year. There was no wonder that many a tribesman, after witnessing this miracle, decided to start erecting a statue in the honor of the magic

caster. A decision he had to use all his influence to put off for the time being, the human had already gathered enough of his people's trust without trying to make pseudo-religious symbols out of him.

Be it as it may, they didn't even have enough barrels to gather all the fish there was.

Most of the remaining villagers had began tearing down trees or old building just to gather enough wood to make barrels out of.

After almost a week of work they had barely managed to store half of the pile.

"It seems to have no end."

He could not help but to agree with Crusch's assessment.

"He just brushed this off as if it was nothing."

Zuzu said. There was no longer bitterness in his tone, it was quite dangerous by now to show such emotions toward the magic caster. Not only for the obvious power of this last one but also for the many lizardmen who would not stand idle when they heard an insult toward their benefactor.

Rumors of the deal struck just ten days before had already circulated all around the village and many thought this would be the beginning of a golden era the likes was never seen before. An era where there would be no fear in producing offspring and starvation would be a mere concern of the past.

And, indeed, it could be so. But at what cost? They have a tentative alliance at best for now, a promise of future trade and nothing else. The threat of the other races inhabiting the forest



was not gone, and now they knew just how outclassed they were compared to their human neighbors.

The words of princess Renner were not forgotten, if they swallowed their pride and gave up their independence, they could get the protection of Satoru, as subjects of his.

He always thought no one would agree to that, and to even mention it would mean war. But now, he was quite fearful of the opposite. How many tribesmen would be willing to give their independence up for a brighter future where starvation didn't exist, where they will no longer have to fear attacks from the outside, where their children will be safe in exchange of obedience?

The answer was, far too many for his liking. Their numbers were already dwindling, if such a thing came to be public, he was sure many would push for the village to take the deal. That would lead to a civil war, possibly meaning the end of their race.

“What is you are thinking of brother?”

The voice of Zaryusu took him out from the dark train of thought his mind fell into.

“Nothing brother, I just wonder... what would be the right future for the tribe.”

He said cryptically, his younger brother just glanced at him, partial understanding in his eyes.

“It is hard, I know, that is why I always thought I would be no good leader... I am not capable of such decisions... give me a blade and I will fight to the death for the tribe, give me leadership and I would stumble around like a drunkard.”

Those words weren't untrue as much as it pained Shasuryu to admit. His brother was not good with any kind of administration.

"Eh, at least our new chief has the right connections I guess..."

Ziguru interjected grabbing a fish from the pile and taking half off with a single bite. To take others' food without asking would have been a great offense in the past, but considering the current circumstances it was no wonder no one said anything about it.

"Yes, I guess Dragon Tusk will have its due this time around..."

Juju added, his eyes never leaving the pile.

"Don't be jealous now, that girl is still as stubborn as ever and a real pain to deal with."

The giant lizardman lamented in his gruff tone, though, the hint of fondness was not lost to Shasuryu.

"Didn't your son leave to become a traveler? It was said he was even stronger than you... maybe he will retake the position of chief when he returns."

Zuzu said hopefully, eliciting a snort from the bigger lizardman.

"Tsk! The day my idiot son can defeat that girl is the day I kiss my own ass! For all she is short, that monster's power really knows no bound, she merely played with me, I wasn't even worthy of being taken seriously in her opinion... and she is just little more than a hatchling in human terms."

Ziguru countered seriously, that was indeed a troubling thought. Shasuryu was aware of the girl's danger even before that, his brother sparred against her after all, and he was defeated. Sure, he didn't fight like his life was on the line, but neither did the girl. 'And to think both the older warriors and magic caster a far

stronger than her' Shasuryu felt like shuddering at the sole thought.

It was a dangerous gamble, but the payoff could be equally great or terrifying.

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

Finally, something was going his way for once, a pleasant change. The scouting groups have been sent swiftly to explore the mountain, that should allow him to cover more terrain in a lot less time. After all, he really didn't feel like randomly traveling among ice and snow for month in search of an entrance that could totally be somewhere else.

Don't get him wrong, he loved the exploration. But the fact he would have to hold back most of his spells while doing so combined with the frailty of most of his companions would have made the whole experience incredibly dull and frustrating.

They would still have the whole Dwarven Kingdom to explore, so that really should not be a problem, he will have his time to have his fun.

Hell, he was so eager to reach the next step he might have overdid it a bit with the resources for the lizardmen tribe. He had no idea a few uses of [Maximize Cloning] would have that effect on fish. In hindsight he should have expected it. Cloning magic worked only on unenchanted items and even then, the quality of the item would determine how many clones. By the results, he guessed fish was of less than common quality.

“Satoru, can you lend me a hand here?”

The melodic voice of a certain princess took him out of his train of thought. The pout she was currently sporting was quite amusing and adorable to say the least.

For all she was a genius, she was still a young girl first. That was shown to him when she asked him to help her clean her hair.

It had been quite baffling at first for Satoru to hear such a clearly mundane request from her. But then again, he had no hair of his own now, and even back in Japan he made sure to cut his hair short every time he had the occasion. So he really had no idea how long hair should be cared for.

Apparently, it was kind of a big deal for Renner as she had pestered him with it for the better part of an hour by now. She insisted that the humid air was continuously ruining her hair. The first time she brought up such a concern he merely used a [Clean] spell which seemed to do the job, though, ever since then, she started pestering him every few days for the same treatment.

She was soon joined by Lakyus, Arche and even Leinas. The first could not stand the itching that situation caused, the second would not abandon her noble etiquette, and the third complained about her hair sticking to her face during battle. Deep in his heart he just thought they were being obsessed with their own hair, like most girls he had known growing up.

“[Clean]”

He intoned as a blue wave of magic passed over Renner, washing away any stains on her.

“Thank you, Satoru, a princess such as me cannot afford to look like a street rat.”

He chuckled at her joking tone.

“Also, it’s not like this isn’t your fault, you were the one saying you liked long hair.”

She shifted the blame on him, he didn’t even remember saying that, she truly had an outstanding memory. The significance of her utterance dawned on him a second later. ‘She had her own hair grow... because I said I liked it?’ that was quite a new one for him. Nobody ever did anything for him just because he said he would appreciate it. Probably just his mother when he was still a child indulged him so.

His eyes fell on the shining golden hair cascading down the princess’ back. Now that they were perfectly clean and illuminated directly by the sun he could admire them in all their glory. It was really like observing a cascade of gold, he had no idea how he missed such a beautiful thing before.

He gently used one of his finger to caress the mesmerizing sight before him. He had no idea till now just how unique that hair was. In his defense, that girl was a walking uniqueness, he would call it a bug in the game, but that would be too ironic even for him.

“You truly make the world shine, don’t you? I wonder why no one ever called you the Golden Princess or something like that.”

He said jokingly, ignoring the devilish smile that dawned upon her visage at his comment.

“I have no need for such fanciness, as long as I have your appreciation, that will be enough.”

It was something so Renner-like to say he felt like he should have anticipated it. ‘This girl...’ the fondness in his heart was not suppressed this time, he was getting better at managing his emotions lately. Excesses would cause him to repress everything,

but calm and collected emotions like tranquility and contentment could still be enjoyed in little doses.

“So, what are you going to do with the lizards?”

The princess asked him, seemingly curious to know about his plans for the lizardmen race.

He had already asked himself that, he had invested far too much here to not try and capitalize on it.

“Trade would not be much benefit, they don’t really have something unique that I could exploit from here, though, medical herbs in the forest could make for a small business I guess...”

He mostly wanted their help in finding the entrance to the Dwarven Kingdom, there was little else he could gain here.

“Although, having friendly relationships with a demi-human race could end up being... an interesting development, rarities could be found anywhere after all.”

He continued. Now that he thought better about the whole thing, he wouldn’t mind exploring how demi-humans developed in this world. Especially specimen like that albino lizard with supposedly great druidic powers. For all he had seen, she seemed like a unique more than rare specimen... as a collector, it was hard to let go of such a unique piece. He wondered... could she give birth to more of her kind if she mated?

“Oh, I see.”

The golden-haired girl pondered his word pensively.

In the meantime, Satoru was already lost in his own thoughts of breeding unique species. He wondered if he could somehow

convince the strongest warrior to mate with that albino... the result of the union could have incredible potential.

Speaking of which he had already started analyzing the growth of humanity if given the right circumstances and gear. He was more than satisfied with Lakyus' results and now he would finally see if the new gear he gave his students would help them learn faster.

Those two robes were mostly trash items, who in their right mind would use something that empowered only one element? Versability was the first step to achieve victory in battle, to take the opponent by surprise was almost like striking a killing blow. That said, the only thing that gave those robes some usefulness was the Experience Boost bonus they provided, even though had no idea how such a thing would affect an inhabitant of the New World.

He would soon find out, he guessed. If this was a success, the next step would be to check if the same treatment could work on demi-humans... 'yes, having those two mate would be for the best' he pondered, since they would have more offspring at a time, he could come in and try to take the most gifted under his tutelage to experiment on.

That sounded like a good plan... yes, that sounded nice.

{Leinas' P.O.V.}

“My Lady, you should not push yourself this far, you have sparred the whole morning and we have been training for the better part of the afternoon.”

She was all for training, after all, she valued strength as a symbol of independence and freedom. Though, even she could acknowledge when something went too far.

“I must go beyond, break my limits, it is like Master Brain said... before overcoming the boundaries of my strength I must push my body beyond its own limits.”

She did not know where all this was coming from but she knew that enough was enough.

She impaled her spear point down into the ground. There was no need for words, that was a statement of her own sentiments.

The glare Lakyus gave her could have burned through her like hellfire.

Silence spanned between the two of them. Neither of the two backing down, waiting for the other to relent, that was until Lakyus averted her gaze first with a sigh.

She planted her sword into the terrain with a heavy sigh.

“I apologize.”

She finally said taking the knightess aback. The sheer pain and regret in her words was not something she expected to hear from the headstrong girl she learned to know and respect.

“My Lady, there is no need to apologize, seeking ever more strength is not something to be shamed though learning when to take a break is-“

“No! I don't mean for that!”

Lakyus interrupted her, the almost broken tone causing Leinas to seriously worry about what was wrong with her.

“I'm sorry for what I said to you before, I understand that you might feel like my goal is impossible to achieve! You might think it stupid and childish, but that is still the dream I am striving toward! But it wasn't right for me to lash out at you only because



you expressed your opinion! Even more after all the help you gave me during these last months! I am sorry!”

By now tears were threatening to spill from her lady’s eyes. She had almost forgot that little exchange even happened to be completely honest. After her curse she had been used to general scorn and all that came with it, so something as minor as what her lady told her that time flied over her head completely.

Though, that didn’t seem to be the case for the young girl before her. For all she was so powerful and gifted she seemed to have a far too gentle and fragile spirit.

Her previous self would have labelled such a person as weak, but she was no longer like that, she had known pain and suffering, she understood what it meant to be at your lowest, she knew what it felt like for revenge to be the only driving purpose pushing against suicide.

And she could not forget that it was exactly that gentleness and frailty that pushed her lady to have her healed without expecting anything in return, just mere hours after Leinas had tried to kill her in that arena.

In that moment she had promised herself that she would cherish and protect that gentleness that allowed for her to be saved, so that it may save many others in the future. Hers wasn’t a simple matter of repaying a life debt, no, hers was a calling toward something greater.

She fell on one knee before the young girl.

“My Lady, do not waste apologies on someone such as myself, your words did not hurt me at all, no, instead they showed me that your determination is truly outstanding! I still believe the change

you speak of is an impossible dream, but if there is someone in this world that could bring such a change, that someone is you, my Lady! So do not hesitate! Do whatever you feel you need to do! I will have your back, no matter what!”

She declared with all the conviction she could muster.

She didn't have to wait for an answer as she immediately felt two arms wrap around her tightly.

“T-Thank you, Leinas.”

Those whispered three words were enough to make her release a sigh of relief. She had done her part well enough for now. Though, how many more of these struggles awaited in her Lady's future?

{One week later}

{Zaryusu's P.O.V.}

“Are you sure you want to do this?”

His brother asked seriously, the situation reminding him of when he announced to him his decision of becoming a traveler.

“Indeed, I truly meant it when I said I wanted to see more of the world before settling down.”

He answered much to the amusement of his brother.

“Eh, I don't remember you saying anything about settling down last time we had this conversation.”

He joked causing Zaryusu to avert his gaze sheepishly.

“What can I say brother, life certainly has a way of bringing us together.”

The wielder of Frost Pain tried to jab to avoid his sudden embarrassment.

“Well, at least you will have a reason to return and don’t get yourself killed.”

His brother, and chief, patted him on the back before leaving him there.

Judging by the sun it seemed like it was about time for them to move.

“Zaryusu.”

He didn’t even take a couple steps before a gentle voice stopped him.

The lizardman immediately turned only to be greeted by the thief who stole of his heart.

“Crusch.”

He uttered her name surprised to see her there.

“So, it’s true, you are going too.”

She stated emotionlessly. They have gotten quite close during the last month or so, at least he liked to think that was the case. It pained him to see her like this.

“Since I was born I had only left my village to fight and kill my own kin... I want to see what else the world has to offer before... well...”

He looked away, not sure how to address his own feelings for the albino lizardman.

“You are so unfair Zaryusu, you can’t just leave after you made me... I mean...”

The Red Eye's acting chieftain stumbled on her words as a deep blush appeared on her face.

The wielder of Frost Pain fell on his knees in front of the albino, taking one of her hands into his own.

“Crusch, I beg of you, indulge this foolish male's desires just one last time.”

He never begged before, not on the verge of death, not to anyone else. This was the first time he voluntarily submitted to someone else.

“But... what if you die? The mountains are dangerous, far more than any part of the forest... there is a big chance you will never return...”

She muttered as she hugged him. He never felt so much at peace before, he was truly utterly foolish to voluntarily leave this wonderful female's side.

Yet, he needed to know what lied out there, he needed to know that his kin, no, his own children will have a future out there!

“Don't you worry, I will come back, I'm not going alone after all, I will have traveling companions far stronger than me by my side.”

He tried to look on the bright side and not treat this as a funeral march.

“I know.”

Even if she said so, the tightening of her embrace made her true feelings perfectly crystal clear.

“I will return, by any means necessary as long as you will be there waiting for me.”

He swore that oath from the depths of his heart. He was nervous to hear her response to his declaration.

“Then don’t make me wait too long or I might begin to look around for someone else.”

She jokingly answered making him release a breath of relief.

“I will not, now that I know your answer, I am even more determined to come back to you.”

He proclaimed as they separated.

“Have a safe trip.”

Crusch whispered, tears barely contained in her mesmerizing crimson eyes.

Zaryusus nodded solemnly before marching away toward the edge of the village where his group was already awaiting him.

“Sorry to keep you waiting.”

He apologized.

“Don’t worry, it is not our place to disturb a farewell between lovers.”

The deep voice of the powerful magic caster almost made Zaryusu flinch. For all he had been nothing but cordial and benevolent since he met him, the lizardman could not scrub off his gut instinct that told him to run every time the man spoke to him.

He had come to know the seven before him far more than he initially thought he would, and yet, the only one he was incapable of getting a read on was Satoru. He did not know if it was due to

his mask or emotionless demeanor, but not being able to get a grasp on the man caused him no little amount of stress.

“I think it would be better for us to depart before the sun reaches its zenith, according to your brother we should find a lizardmen encampment just at the base of the mountain.”

Gazef explained, not that he was unaware of it in the first place.

“Umu, it is about time for our adventure to begin... we have been delayed long enough I think.”

The words of the masked caster sent shivers down Zaryusu’s spine. He had no idea if he was annoyed at how much time it took to set everything up or he was just stating a fact.

All he knew was that he was about to depart for his journey a second time, and by the way it was looking, he was not sure when he will return.

“I wonder if we will find a dragon flying around.”

Lakyus wondered aloud much to the lizardman’s dismay. Sometimes he couldn’t tell if the human was just that much overconfident or just plain reckless.

“I heard Ice Dragons are a common sight around the peaks of the mountains.”

Offered Leinas who just seemed to be completely at ease with the whole situation.

“Ice Dragons are weak to fire I guess, so we will need your help Arche.”

The hatchling apprenticing under the masked magic caster added.

“Don’t be a fool, I cannot bring down a dragon even with my elemental advantage, if something like that came to be, I am sure Master Satoru will take care of it.”

That sounded far better to Zaryusu’s ears, though, even he had his reservations on the ability of a single man to take down a fully grown dragon.

Dragons were almost legendary creatures in the lizardmen’s eyes, hell, some legend even said their race descended from great Dragon Lords who mated with giant Water Serpents.

“That is no way of thinking about a battle Arche, do you remember what I taught you while facing more powerful opponents?”

The magic caster in question chastised his disciple who lowered her head.

“Always find out everything you can on your opponent... prepare for any possibility... do not let the enemy carp any of your secrets... and victory shall be yours before the battle begins.”

Those were indeed wise words, the lizardman could not help but admit, the war taught him something similar.

“And Rayne, what did I tell you about recklessness?”

This time it was the other disciple’s turn to be chastised.

“Do not engage in unnecessary battles... pride will only lead to ruin... make your opponent feel like they are in control until they exhaust all their resources... do not hesitate to retreat with your tail between your legs if it serves to secure more information on the opponent.”

The masked magic caster nodded.

“For all it might seem strange to you, I have ran from battles many a time, I learned and adapted to my opponents who would boast of their strength and take pride in forcing my retreat... and when I came back I utterly annihilated them using what they gave me.”

Zaryusu felt equal fear and awe at the caster’s words. His younger self would call this a cowardly way of fighting but, in the end, what was a sense of pride and honor worth compared to one’s own life?

War was hell, there was no place for honor or pride when you were starving and forced yourself to resist the urge to cannibalize your fallen comrades.

For the first time since he knew the man, Zaryusu felt like he understood him to a certain degree. This was a man who had known war for sure. The way he talked about battle could not be casual, he had been through the same hell that Zaryusu suffered.

“Now enough chit-chat, we are moving out, if we are lucky, we will reach the encampment before sunset.”

The magic caster commanded as they began their own search for the Dwarven Kingdom and all that hid within it.

{Feo Berkana}

{Pe Riyuro’s P.O.V.}

It was just another ordinary day for the Quagoa Lord, metals were mined, infants were born, dwarves were either enslaved or killed, and the White Dragon Lord oversaw everything.

Oh, how he hated that frozen lizard. He represented everything he despised, such laziness, dwelling among reaches and mates as he spread more and more of his spawns.



Most fools of Riyuro's kind would think them alike, but they could not be any different in their similarities.

While they both gained their position through power, the Dragon Lord grew fat and complacent, happy to dwell in his riches. Riyuro instead worked his way to the top and instead of being a fool like many before him, managed to stop the inner fighting of the Quagoa and instead brought them to strive for ever more greatness.

Competitiveness was engraved in their nature, but that didn't mean they would have to kill each other to show their greatness. No, competitiveness could be incredibly fickle.

Who found more metals, who killed more enemies, who gathered more food. Those are all competitive activities that would bring different clans together and strengthen the race as a whole in the meantime.

They were born as the lowest of the lowest. They were born among the advanced dwarves, the unstoppable giants and the almighty dragons. And yet, they persisted, they thrived, and one day they would dominate all the mountains.

They already grew strong enough to commence their counterattack against the dwarves, but they will not stop there. They will grow ever stronger, they will be mighty enough to punch giants to death, they will advance enough to shot dragons down from the sky, there was no limit to what they could do.

The fact they advanced so much in so few years under his rule was proof enough of his statement.

Twenty years ago no clan would have dared defy the dwarves if not out of desperation. Right now, they were conquering their cities and enslaving their kin to do their bidding.

The day will come when all the mountains will tremble at the sole whisper of the name Quagoa. He will make sure of it no matter what.

His kin will overcome everything, no matter the cost!

**A.N.**

**And here we are Dwarven arc officially begins!**

**So, any comments, any ideas on what will happen once Satoru make contact? And who will he meet first?**

**What will happen to this strange groups of misfits?**

**You will find out only by reading more!**

**That said, see you next time and stay safe!**