

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

It has been some time since I sat on my chair to write anything. Well, I guess moving to a new house and setting up all my stuff will do that, but finally after a month of work I am done! And with this, I should have like 2 more hours of free time per day now that I don't have to constantly travel to and from work.

My personal life aside, we are finally back in the kingdom and, oh boy, the gang will have stuff to do here... remember the coup? Yeah, that is still a thing fresh in the mind of everyone, especially the king, not to speak of Satoru's "happy" bride to be.

But without further ado, enjoy the chapter!

**Beta Reader: Don Orbit (go check out his amazing works!);
SirWertsalot (Hi.)**

Chapter 26: To be a Princess and to be a Teacher

Home. She had come back home, but what even was home in the first place? The place you were born in? The place your family lived in? The place you grew up in? For the third princess home was none of that, and she came to realize this very soon after she returned to her birthplace.

Home was where happiness was, where safety was. Home was what made her feel warm inside. In short, her home was Satoru,

and not being around him was like constantly being away from home.

She grew so accustomed to his presence that as soon as she had to separate from him for more than a day, she began to feel sick. She felt cold no matter where she was, and food tasted like ash in her mouth.

It felt like years since she saw him for the last time, and yet it had merely been four days since she returned home. Two excruciating days of being locked in her room as even the company of Lakys was stripped from her since her parents recalled her home.

'If I was queen, none of this would have happened... if I had power, no one would dare touch what is rightfully mine'

Those thoughts haunted her mind for the last hours, making her muscles constantly clench in response to her swirling emotions that went from sadness to rage to loneliness to sadness again.

Maybe she should accelerate her plans, get a bunch of knives in the castle and be done with all of this. But that would be most unwise and stupid, and she was neither of those no matter how much the situation frustrated her.

She looked from her window as the sun was inexorably falling toward the horizon, and as the red light of dusk caressed her face, she turned to do what had to be done. She adjusted her crown on her head, the crown her beloved gifted to her almost a full year before and opened her room's door.

As expected, she found herself facing the Warrior's Captain back. Her father was unmovable on which guards would be assigned to her room, and to her surprise Gazef and a few of his Warrior

Troop's members were chosen, almost as if her father cared for what would happen to her.

“My apologies princess but the King's orders remain absolute. You may not leave your room until he says so.”

The strongest warrior of the kingdom instructed.

‘Loyal to a fault and stubborn as ever I see. That is why Lakyus is such a better pet than you. She only listens to one person and one person alone’

It was left unsaid that said person was the third princess herself.

‘But it is this exact reason you are such an easy target. I only need to push a few buttons and...’

A pleasant smile appeared on her face. She practiced that for almost half an hour that morning.

“I am afraid this matter is beyond what my father wants or doesn't want... I hope you still remember my box. Well, it is time to show you why it needed your protection for the whole trip back.”

The Warrior Captain didn't seem too convinced which made her grimace inside. ‘Oh well...’ she sighed as she opened the black box she currently was hiding behind her back and, without even looking, took out the first paper sheet, handing it to the Warrior Captain.

“This took a lot of work on my part... and my good friend Jircniv's.”

She said, childish innocence making its way into her tone. Gazef unfolded the paper and only read till half the page before immediately going pale and looking back at the mountain of folded sheets inside the box. He immediately folded the paper in his

hands again and placed it back in the box, closing it with urgency in the process.

“All of you with me! Escort the princess safely! And if anyone tries to stand in our way incapacitate them! This is a matter of critical security for the kingdom! Protect her highness and that box at all costs!”

The Warrior Captain loudly instructed, making some of his soldiers jump in surprise.

“We should get my brother’s too... he is the heir to the throne after all. This is a matter concerning him directly.”

Renner calmly said as the Warrior Captain nodded in agreement before escorting her away with his Warrior Troop all around them, a hand always on the hilt of his blade as if ready to strike down any surprise attacks, not that there would be any in the first place.

It didn’t take long for them to reach her brother’s favorite place, a big room where he often entertained himself and the nobles who licked his boots... or even his lady friends. Which seemed to be the occasion judging by her brother’s boisterous laughter and some more delicate, and clearly fake, feminine giggling.

Without a care in the world, Renner knocked on the door and before waiting for an answer opened it, revealing her brother having tea with two ladies of some unimportant noble houses.

Her brother’s glee and merriment disappeared alongside his smirk as his eyes fell on her.

“What are You doing here?”

He scowled as venom filled every last of his words.

“I apologize brother, but father is asking for both of us. May you leave your lady friends for a few moments?”

The prince’s scowl only intensified as he stood up. As unpleasant as it was, not even he could ignore a call from the King himself. Gazef didn’t even flinch at the blatant lie, probably too concerned by what he has seen in her box.

The eldest and youngest royal children marched through the hallways in silence, escorted by the ever-vigilant Warrior Troop. It took far longer than usual to reach the king’s solar, or at least that seemed to be the case for everyone else but Renner who gently hugged her box as if it was her firstborn.

‘Catalyst would be a far better word’ she pondered in her mind as Gazef knocked on the elegant door to announce them.

They were shown inside. Their father was at his usual desk going through what the realm demanded of him. He arched an eyebrow as the royal children entered, as if he didn’t expect to ever see them together like that.

“Barbro, Renner, to what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?”

He asked, confusing his oldest son who turned toward the youngest.

“Ah, father. I am afraid the reason I had to go to you with big brother is far from pleasurable, unfortunately.”

The princess said, awaiting the outburst that didn’t take more than a few seconds to arrive.

“You lied! You told me father called for us! Why you little-!”

Her brother spat in rage until her father stopped him with a glare.

“That is enough Barbro. I am sure Renner had her reasons for what she did.”

A small smile almost threatened to surface on Renner’s face.

‘Just showing you a bit of competence already makes you trust me so much father? What kind of worthless garbage have you surrounded yourself with to have such a reaction I wonder...’ she idly mused as she took some steps forward.

“The castle walls and floors have ears, and seeing a mere third princess collect the heir to the throne and asking a meeting with the king would have attracted far too much attention... I am sure that this fake call I made up already attracted some curious gazes and ears, but it could not be helped...”

She began explaining to an impatient Barbro and curious Rampossa. She lightly placed the box on the desk and pushed it toward her father.

“What is in this box Renner?”

Her father’s tone was as serious as it could get, his eyes fixed on her small form. Before answering, Renner swept her hair to the side with her hand, grazing her crown in the process, as if she wanted to draw strength from Satoru himself.

“Everything father. All the cause of suffering of this kingdom, all the ruin and misery that hides behind our glorious line, and an evil whose eradication has been long overdue.”

To quote one of Satoru’s stories, it was the Re-Estize’s Pandora’s Box, and even if she already knew how it would end, a little part of her could not help but feel giddy at the thought of what her father’s reaction would be... was this how the Gods felt when they

gave that Box to Pandora in the original story? She could not help but wonder as her father so incautiously opened said box, and so the die was cast.

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

'Why? Why must it be always children?'

He could not help but despair as the two children fawned over him, so eager to learn, so eager to grow, and yet he was nothing but a fraud. Oh, he could cast magic more powerful than anyone in both the kingdom and empire, but he hadn't the slightest idea of how to teach such a thing to anyone, even less children.

"So, what are we going to learn first?! Fire spells?! Ice spells?! Please tell me its fire spells!"

Almost cried out an overexcited Rayne, making Satoru sigh internally. He never meant to take Rayne as a disciple but after he came back with Arche, he could not have turned him down if he asked. It just would not have been fair. And so now he found himself with not just one but two disciples, a criminal organization and a country-wide business to care for.

'This couldn't get any worse...'

Unfortunately for him, every time he said so to himself, he was continuously proven wrong and there seemed no end to his misfortune apparently.

"Conduce yourself as a proper student, will you?... Gods this is why I couldn't stand commoners in the academy..."

His first student admonished her, even if slightly younger, companion. And, even if she mumbled the last part, Satoru could

not help but grimace, or he would if he had the facial muscle to perform the act.

‘These two are going to drive me nuts!’

He despaired as the two of them started bickering as they always did since they met the day before.

“You are just mad the Princess and Lady Lakyus are far cuter than you!”

The brown-haired boy incautiously said, making Satoru wince internally.

‘That was a bad move’

His prediction immediately came to be as Arche’s face became as red as her robes as she prepared to swing her staff at the boy’s face.

“Settle down! Both of you.”

He said in the most authoritarian tone he could muster. Immediately, both of them settled down, their heads down casted as if they were reprimanded children... well, that was exactly what they were though.

They currently sat in the new house Satoru asked Hilma to buy for him. It cost him some sweet coins but in the end, he didn’t have much choice. He could not let Arche live with him and Hilma in the small apartment above his shop. There wasn’t enough space, and it would not have been proper. So, he arranged for her a house just a few minutes by foot from his shop, and since the house itself was pretty big due to being in the middle of the high district, he

arranged for Rayne to stay there as well since he took him up as an apprentice.

It turned out to be a huge error as the two of them could not apparently stand each other for reasons unknown to him. They had lived together for only two days, after he succeeded in convincing Randel and Marietta, and since then it has been constant bickering every time he was around. He sighed again.

“Well then. Now why don’t the both of you expose what you know to each other, so you may be aware of what level you stand on and give me an idea of how to begin, as you are my first students.”

He sat on the floor following his classic Japanese style. His students hesitated before following his example.

“Ladies first then.”

He motioned for Arche to go first.

“I am Arche Eeb Rile Furt, noble daughter and heir of the house of Furt. As a 2nd tier magic caster, I am capable of casting [Continual Light], [Flash], [Magic Arrow], [Magic Bolt] and [Cinder’s Rain].”

She said sending a little smug grin toward her fellow student.

“I-I am Rayne Bollen! A 1st tier magic caster capable of casting [Light], [Magic Arrow] and... and now I am w-working on [Freezing] a-a 2nd tier spell!”

The boy said revealing how he was working on advancing his level.

‘To do so at this age would be a show of incredible potential... or so they said back in the academy’ evaluated the Overlord.

“And what can you tell me about your method of studying? About your theories of casting?”

He asked more for himself than anyone else. Arche seemed particularly eager to answer that.

“I follow the theory of Völva, which recites that mana needs a catalyst to be utilized and shaped at the best of the caster’s ability.”

The young noble blonde proclaimed, proud of her choice apparently. ‘Is there some kind of rivalry between these schools of thought on magic?’ the undead wondered.

“I-I don’t really follow any theory, I-I thought they were b-boring and so I just focused on I-learning spells.”

The boy said, apparently embarrassed at his admission, gaining an incredulous look from the girl.

“H-How in the world do you cast spell without focusing on a certain method?! You shouldn’t even be able to cast in the first place!”

She cried out, outraged at the sole thought of what the boy suggested.

“I-I just focus on my mana okay! I-I just draw from it and cast my spell!”

The boy cried out in embarrassment. But before the girl could retort anything Satoru chose to interfere.

“Arche, do you think those who came up with those theories were the only ones capable of casting?”

He asked. Immediately, the girl shook her head as the concept was absurd.

“Then you can understand that the first castings were done on basic instinct to draw out the magical energy we had within. Theories may be important, but they are not the only way of casting magic... they are ways to perfect what the human body is already capable of, or else those not following such rules shouldn't be able to cast magic in the first place.”

Satoru said as if he understood anything on the theories of casting, but as any other human invention, it could not have developed on something completely nonexistent, meaning that casting based on pure instinct would still be a thing. Otherwise, he had no idea how he was able to cast spells himself.

“But wouldn't that cause the spell to make you use far more mana than it would normally require?”

Inquired a skeptical Arche.

“And that is why mana control is so fundamental for a beginner caster.”

His explanation seemed to confuse the two children.

“Mana... control? Is that some kind of spell?”

Inquired the noble girl.

‘Well... yes, but not really what I meant... I wonder, is this even a thing in this world?... Could I teach how to cast spells on instinct as I do?’

That would certainly be an endeavor worthy of some research.

“Let’s see... how could I explain this... you must find the core of your magic and draw from it at will to be able to dose how much mana you draw and in what kind of spell you want to morph it into...”

He tried to explain what he felt every time he cast a spell.

“It seems like Rayne is already doing something similar even if very unrefined in comparison to an optimized caster.”

He added, as the young boy was now giving a smug smile to his fuming companion.

“B-but how can you optimize such a thing?! W-would you not risk putting too much mana into a simple spell and too few i-into a powerful one, resulting in failing the casting?!”

The blonde protested, as what was taught to her went clearly against all Satoru was saying.

“That is why you must refine such a technique to almost perfection to use it to its fullest and not being a hindrance instead.”

It was something that came automatically to him.

“Now close your eyes and try to find that core inside you. Try to mold it and shift it, make it flow naturally in your body like a river and try casting a simple spell from it.”

His students did as he said and closed their eyes. Immediately Satoru cast a silent (Mana Vision) on himself, a basic spell to see the amount of mana in an entity. Easy to counter but, given the situation, it would be useless to use more complex spells. He could now see the amount of mana dancing, or in this case glowing, around his students.

It was puny. He could clearly see that. He could not even say who had more, even if technically Arche should have more, but the difference was so little in his eyes that it meant nothing. The most interesting part was instead observing how said energy was being moved around by his students. While Rayne's was flowing erratically toward his hands, Arche's was bouncing all over the place, dispersing into the air for the most part while only few drops reached her hands.

“[Light]!”

Exclaimed Rayne casting his 1st tier spell. The glowing orb appeared over his hand levitating in the air. To Satoru's eyes it seemed like at least half of his mana was wasted in the process as it vaporized into thin air.

“[Continual Light]”

The slightly older magic caster cast her spell, but, as Satoru expected, only a few sparks came out of her hands, and nothing more happened as almost every single drop of mana was erratically going its own way.

“Umu, it seems like young Rayne has a bit more control over his mana flow than you, Arche. We will need to rectify that.”

The undead magic caster said to the blond girl's discontent.

“But why? I can use my staff! Why should I waste time with this?”

She rebutted. ‘Because I need to know if it is possible for natives to learn and control their mana flow’ but certainly he could not say so. He waited a few seconds before answering.

“You know young lady, one of my friends once said that being able to make up for one’s weaknesses is the true path toward self-betterment and strength... by relying uniquely on a staff you are basically useless once you are disarmed or lose it in battle. That may be an easier way to reach a certain level, but it is certainly a liability.”

He said as he remembered how Takemi was always trying to optimize his build in order to defeat Touch-Me.

“Not to mention another of my friends teaching me the art of deception and its usefulness in a life or death scenario... when the enemy thinks that they will defeat you just by taking away or destroying your staff, they will spend everything they have on that endeavor, only to discover that you are just as, or even more, proficient with your bare hands... that will shatter their fighting spirit and ensure a certain advantage on your part.”

Punitto Moe was an expert at those kinds of deceptions, and it was not a surprise that such a way of thinking rubbed off on Satoru who made the best of what his roleplaying build offered to deceive his enemies into a false sense of security.

“B-but wouldn’t the point of being a magic caster be to avoid close quarters combat?”

Joined Rayne, who seemed to have found interest in Satoru’s explanations.

“Of course. As long as you can turn yourself invisible or fly, what would be the point of learning such things?”

Satoru questioned his own students who seemed to have no answer to that. He sighed as the both of them did not seem to have a clue.

“[Fly] is a 3rd tier spell. Is that even an option at the moment? [Invisibility] is a useful 2nd tier spell that could get you away from low skilled foes, but a normal warrior with a good self-awareness could find you easily even if invisible.”

He explained, glancing directly at Arche.

“Do you think you could get away from Lakyus? Even by flying?”

The blonde blushed a little as she was asked that specific question.

“I-I think I might manage... b-but she would probably be relentless and t-throw her sword at me.”

She admitted.

“There is no might or could in battle. You simply either can or you cannot. Luck is a fake concept when it comes to battle. Everything is decided by yours or your adversary’s skills and abilities... you may consider an enemy falling into a hole or stumbling luck, but in truth that is merely the fault of their own lack of self-awareness.”

Both of his students nodded vigorously.

‘They seem to be receptive, that’s good’ maybe teaching wasn’t as bad as he thought after all ‘Yamaiko would have had a blast at this...’ but he himself was feeling some kind of curiosity if not excitement at the thought of what those two might become.

{Ro-Lente’s Castle}

{Renner’s P.O.V.}

“DAMN THEM ALL TO HELL!!! THOSE TRAITOROUS BASTERDS!!! I WILL HAVE THEM HANGED!!!”

The first prince shouted in rage as he violently kicked over an elegant chair in his rage.

Her father's head was down casted as he placed both his hands on his forehead while looking down at the pages and pages of private correspondence sprawled all over his desk.

“Madness...”

Mumbled the Warrior Captain in disbelief at what he was being allowed to read.

“Just under my nose... I had tea with Marquis Boullope... he looked at me as if everything was normal, and yet, this was his plan all along...”

Her father seemed more defeated than anything.

‘What a worthless spirit you have, father of mine. So easily unsettled, so easily broken... no wonder you are no great king and the noble faction is pushing so much these last years of your rule’

The princess wore an expressionless mask as she observed the scene unfolding before her.

‘A tired old man and a petulant child having a tantrum.... No wonder Jir wanted to take over. It might even be better that way’ or at least that would be the case if his actions didn’t go against hers and Satoru’s wishes.

“HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM! THEY WANTED TO KILL YOU AND ZANAC! AND USE ME AS SOME LAP DOG! THOSE TRAITEROUS SCUM!”

The prince continued to shout until her father finally slammed his fist on the oakwood desk.

“Stop shouting Barbro! This is not something the whole kingdom needs to hear!”

As if he was a whipped dog, Barbro immediately stood down, now focusing on something else in shame as he could not bear to look at their father anymore after being reprimanded. ‘Still a little boy I see’ not that her opinion of him could get any lower to begin with.

Her eyes met his for a moment and so he found something to shift the attention to.

“You! How did you find out all of this! These are private correspondences!”

He questioned aggressively, not that Renner was intimidated in any way by his demeanor.

“I just made the best of what I had brother... when I heard of the attempted coup, I already started diplomatic contact with the emperor... he is certainly a fascinating character. He is smart and loves peace above all... in the last days we spent together he even confessed to me that the reason he had to kill his own family was due to their plan of starting a war of conquest toward Re-Estize... They planned to drag out the war and make us starve while they isolated us economically... a cruel and terrible fate that would have resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands... he chose the lesser evil among the two and, instead, did what he knew was right to ensure prosperity for both our nations.”

Her explanation stunned the room’s occupants who happily drank from her poisoned but sweet goblet of lies.

“It was that love for peace that united us toward a common goal, finding out who was trying to start a war.”

She continued calmly as her father's tired eyes widened in shock.

“A war?”

He asked disbelievingly.

“Yes father. I could not believe it myself when I discovered it, as it sounded so outlandish for such a thing to happen... we both just thought there might be something happening behind the scenes as the coup was far too perfectly planned...”

She continued as they were almost eating out of her hand right now.

“As we dug into some empire nobles who might have had something to do with what happened here, we uncovered the terrifying truth of how deep and twisted this plan really was, as the coup was merely a steppingstone for the hell which was to come.”

She said as she stepped forward, now standing in front of the king's desk, her small hand wrapped around a bundle of letters as she raised them for all to see.

“These are Marquis Boullope's correspondence with other prestigious members of the Noble Faction. As you can see, the ramification of their action is treasonous to say the least. They openly speak of murder of the royal line and putting a puppet king on the throne... unfortunately, there is no doubt on the validity of the family seal here and all the details described in the letters are something that only the true perpetrator would know...”

She said as she passed the documents to her father. She moved toward the left corner gathering a few more letters in her hands.

“Unfortunately it gets only worse from here... these are letters of sympathetic nobles from the Royal Faction, all those who hoped brother would be a fine puppet on the throne expressed their support toward Boullope by gifting him resources... normally there would be nothing incriminating with these letters but the timing of such... generous donations and the fact that they are on opposite sides of the political spectrum is a clear sign of their complicity.”

She said as she passed the letters to her brother who was currently slack jawed as he had a stupidly confused look on his face. She didn't give him a second more of her time and turned to get on the other side of the desk collecting some more documents in the process.

“These are the documents regarding Boullope's agreement with the Empire's Elite Nobility. They would aid him in the effort of provoking a war with the Empire... the plan was to set up the evidence of them being responsible for the coup once big brother managed to get a few children in his betrothed, Boullope's daughter. Even if this isn't mentioned he would probably have him killed during the war... as you can see the war would end with the kingdom's eastern border being annexed to the Empire, as a reward for their service.”

She placed the documents of the agreement between Boullope and the Empire in Gazef's hands.

“That would leave Bullope as king basically...”

Muttered her father with a shocked expression on his face. Renner merely laughed, a laughter without any joy in it.

“But that is when things get interesting father. The Empire Nobility were having their own plans all along since Boulope contacted them”

She gathered a few more sheets from Gazef’s corner, faking to analyze them with care.

“I and my friend Jircniv managed to gather this up... details of a coup within the Empire itself... you see father, Jircniv, as a pacifist, is despised from the nobility who is mostly composed by warmongers... his only power lies, ironically, in the army itself, that he protects and cherishes so much, and in return they love him for not sending them to die in meaningless wars just made to entertain himself.”

She explained her fake version of the emperor. She almost grinned at the thought of him finding out what kinds of rumors she was spreading about him, as she inadvertently forgot to inform him about this part of her plan. ‘We all must find amusement in the small things of life from time to time... even more so if Satoru is not around’ she scowled as the coldness she felt since she left his side only intensified at the thought of him and his gentle touch on her skin.

“I saw it father. The Empire’s might is formidable as a defensive force. As of now, there is no way we could successfully invade them. Even if we armed every able man and boy in the whole kingdom, we might take a few cities but the huge losses would force us back to our border in no time.”

She sighed, faking a sense of resignation, creating an even more gloomy atmosphere to fall on the room.

“They plan to use the kingdom to undermine the power of the Emperor, pointing at him for causing the war in the first place. They will take him down and then replace him with an obedient puppet, and while Boullope will gloat on his throne, the Empire’s Nobility will retaliate claiming it as a rightful and vengeful war... they will annex the kingdom, and if Boullope resists, as he surely will, the amount of casualties will be incalculable... they will pay for every town and village but they will not stop, no matter what.”

She placed the final pile of documents she gathered as she spoke in front of her father, a grim expression on her face.

“And only once the earth will be scorched and our cities little more than rubbles, then and only then will we know peace.”

Her words managed to have the desired effect as dread was written all over the other occupants of the room.

“This is madness... father! We must arrest all of these traitors!”

‘Idiocy has no limit apparently’ Renner didn’t even bother answering the moronic demand of the first prince. The king didn’t seem to have enough patience either apparently.

“Putting on trial 2/3 of the nobility for treason against the crown... we would have a rebellion on our hands in no time... we cannot mobilize a great force to apprehend them either as they are the ones controlling most of the army... in the end there is nothing we can do.”

The king said bluntly. His face seemed to have aged a decade in the last 15 minutes. Her brother loudly swore before turning and kicking over another chair.

“Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuuuuuucccccck!”

Barbro roared in his rage which was most similar to his previous childish tantrum than anything remotely intimidating.

“What will we do now Your Majesty?”

Inquired the Warrior Captain, ever ready to receive orders from his king. Said old man just looked down at his own hands without uttering a word for at least a few minutes before raising his gaze.

“Renner, what would you do?... You brought all of this on my table, and yet I am sure you didn’t come here without anything to say about it.”

Finally, the king spoke causing Renner to internally sigh. ‘Delegating things as ever, are we? You bunch of halfwits would not be able to put your own cloths on if you weren’t aided... and yet, that is exactly what will allow my plans to go through... your incompetence will be the catalyst’ she smugly thought as she refrained from smiling in front of her father and limited herself to her default courteous smile.

“Of course. I am aware of the dire situation, and I think I might know a solution... even if drastic. We must do what needs to be done to ensure our survival... and I know just the right person for the job.”

Her father fixed his gaze on her. Gazef seemed to be realizing something and even her oafish brother stopped his tantrum. Renner elegantly sat on one of the few chairs still standing and relaxed before beginning to build the foundations of her future.

{The Sorcerer’s Shop}

{Satoru’s P.O.V.}

The former guildmaster of Ainz Ooal Gown sat behind his desk, mentally exhausted by his two new students. As if freeing himself from a weight, he removed his mask, exposing his perfect skull and loudly sighing, not sure himself on how exactly such a thing was physically possible.

“Hard day? I know Rayne can be a handful when he gets overexcited.”

The other occupant of the room, the current manager of Seven Hands, Hilma, asked him as she continued to go through what seemed to be a bunch of reports.

She didn't even flinch at the sight of his visage exposed, something Satoru was internally very grateful for. He had no idea what he would do without her in the first place. He just returned a few days ago and he couldn't believe how many things he had to manage just for his business alone. And she was responsible for Seven Hands as well! He had worried about her health; did she eat enough? Did she sleep enough? Did she have some time off at all? But all his worries were swept away by her assuring him it was okay.

But it wasn't okay, not in Satoru's eyes. She began to remind him of Herohero and his shitty work environment, and the most disturbing part of that line of thought was that, in this case, the evil boss figure would be filled in by him. That was exactly the reason why he chose to start taking care of his growing business more seriously and diligently from now on.

That was a big mistake, as he could not even begin to understand how to deal with the sheer enormity of what his brand had become while he left it to Hilma or was away in the Empire.

He had just basic economic education for crying out loud! He was never taught how to be a manager! He was able to sell. That was true. He had a good understanding of basic economical and capitalistic mechanics and theories, but the most he could do was manage a shop, maybe two, if they were in the same area... but there now were 19! Freaking 19 shops all over the kingdom! Not to speak about managing relations with the many Adventurer Guilds and Magician Guilds! The former was trying to lick his boots to get discounts and favorable agreements on monster's hide, while the latter was like managing a bunch of factories who constantly begged for budget increases in return for increased productivity!

In short, it was a huge mess and pain in the ass! He would have cried if he had the bodily capability of doing so. Maybe he should just have run off from the Empire and disappeared into nothingness.

“Those on your desk are the balances and revenues of each shop for the last year. They arrived around a month ago, but I thought you would still be interested to see them. Seven Hands got their big cut from them, but that can't be helped if we want to maintain our current order and standards in the organization.”

Hilma interrupted his musings about fleeing the country all together and gave him a good opportunity to focus on something he actually could easily understand. Back in the 22nd century, the filling in of such paperwork was left to the machines but revising of the minor details was still done by humans, such as him. Corporations hoped that their employees would have some inputs on how to cut costs even more if they could get a look at the actual data.

It was a stressful job. Satoru always felt expectations being put on him every time he did it, and no matter how many times he read them, he always felt like he was missing something. That was not the case right now as he simply had to analyze the data and not find a way to cut costs.

He spent the next hour giving a general look to said papers and for once he was really satisfied. The final yearly amount was around 11,300 platinum coins. Considering taxes and costs, the final revenue was around 5,500 platinum coins, of which 2,500 were spent as funds for the betterment and reorganization of Seven Hands. Hilma told him she aimed for the organization to be fully self-sufficient in the next decade but as of now they would need large funds to sustain their costs as they rebuild the organization in both structure and image.

That left him as a person with 3,000 platinum coins he had no idea how to use. He should invest them somewhere. That would certainly be better than hiding them in the closet.

Normally moving around such quantities of money in a country would lead to ruining its economy or leaving certain areas completely poor while enriching others. He and Hilma discussed the matter at length once they started expanding, but in the end, his 22nd century's economic theories won over and most of what they gained from the selling of items they reinvested in the same areas it was gained, in the form of buying food for Seven Hands' many workers or generally restructuring abandoned parts of cities so that said workers had a place to live in. In short, all the money the guild gave them were returned to the people, like farmers, sellers or builders, who would in return make new requests to the guild. A perfect cycle if he could say so himself.

That was why reinvesting his money was so important. He could not simply leave that much wealth to rot and take it away from the market cycle.

“Did we receive any answer from the Draconic Kingdom yet?”

Satoru finally asked once he put away the papers. Hilma glanced at him just for a moment.

“No. Still, I think your offer was fairly more generous than it should have been. Are you sure that hiring adventurers to guard the convoys will be enough?”

She asked back with a skeptical tone.

“I already asked them to pay for the high cost of transportation, giving them a good discount on the products would only be fair considering their huge order... I will also send something in advance to clear the area of any major possible danger. I will not have my investment lost to a pile of bones with no brain.”

That made Hilma actually chuckle a quite melodic thing, or at least he would have thought so if he wasn't distracted analyzing the hypocrisy of what he just said.

“Umu, what are you working on?”

Trying to change the subject, Satoru inquired about Hilma's work, which caused the well-endowed blonde to lose her smile as she looked down on the papers in front of her as if they had kicked her puppy.

“The princess... new project... we already set up preparations. I am actually surprised you would give your permission for this.”

She said, a more serious expression on her face. 'Permission? For what? I just made the two of you speak with each other... where in the world did you get my approval from?' he was quite confused but since it seemed like this thing had been going on for a while, to just come out of the blue and admit he didn't know what she was talking about would leave a very poor impression as a boss.

'It's Renner's project, so I guess it will be fine... it's not like she is going to burn down the kingdom...' he just lifted the responsibility and placed it on Renner's common sense.

"Umu, just do what you need to do."

He curtly answered. He should probably question Renner next time he sees her.

A.N.

It's been some time, but alas, life is life and I finally moved to my new house, so there is that. Pretty time consuming if I could say so myself.

Also, remember when chapters were normally around 4k/5k words? Well, apparently those times are dead and gone (if not for intermissions and side stories). Now I seem incapable of writing anything less than 6k/7k words. Good for you guys, I guess.

Not really much to say. We are just starting up on the next arc here and, oh boy, I am curious to see all your theories and reactions to this! So kindly leave a Review? Will you? We are getting close to 2k reviews and it's kind of insane considering this is the 26th chapter!

Interesting facts:

- 1) Völva meant “staff” Or “staff wielder” in ancient Norse language.**
- 2) I know Satoru’s job has not been stated in canon leaving it at “salaryman” but considering his way of thinking in vol. 10 and much more in vol. 11 added to his good “bullshitting himself out of awkward conversations” ability, I am fairly safe to assume his job revolved around economy if not directly selling.**
- 3) This is more of a warning, as this is the first chapter of the arc it has many things still left unanswered so, don’t think those are plot holes or anything, it is just a matter of time before we start addressing that stuff. (I can’t stand people calling out plot holes on stories or arcs which aren’t even finished, how in the world would you know if that is a plot hole or something the author has yet to address?)**

Have a nice day and stay safe!