

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

*Status/written text*

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

**It's i-i-intemission time! Okay, old references aside, get some tissues, and no... not for that type of fun... unless you have some weird kinks, I don't judge but just don't let me know.**

**Jokes aside (which you will need), I thank again all my great supporters, without you I have no idea if this story would be even alive by now.**

**So thank you, and I hope you have a nice read!**

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

Intermission IV: Hopes and Dreams for this Cruel World

The petite woman was sprawled over the counter, her masked face between her arms as if she was completely blacked out. 'Like I could even remember the bliss that sleep brought' she mentally complained. On a second note, she would probably not want to sleep at all, only the gods knew what kind of nightmares her mind would conjure up when not being under her constant vigilance.

She already had enough problems without having to worry about her mind potentially interfering too.

“Copper for your thoughts?”

Her internal turmoil was interrupted by a familiar voice. She glanced up at the bartender which never spoke to her for all the hours she had lied there, but now for some reason decided to approach her.

“I think that my thoughts would be more valuable than that, and I would not wish to impose my personal luggage upon anyone else, even less a new father.”

Seeing in how much of a poor mood she was in, she would have normally lashed out at anyone who tried to approach her, but this man, Faust, just possessed something that did not allow her to do so.

“Ah, miss Evileye, I am a bartender, listening to people’s depressing tales is part of my job, I am far too used to it to let myself get overwhelmed.”

The man laughed her protests away as he began cleaning the used mugs lying all around.

“Isn’t it a little too early to close up?”

She questioned, glancing around discretely, and noticing she was the only remaining patron in the establishment.

“Well, it isn’t all that early and I have decided that for once I can take it easy, even more if there is a valued customer needing some space.”

Her eyes widened as she realized the implications of his words. This man just closed up missing out on potential earnings... for her sake? It was true she had been here quite an amount of times, but that was merely to gather information and to call her a valued customer would be laughable seeing how little coin she spent here.

Actually, now that she thought about it, the only time she probably spent a few coppers was to have some man loosen his tongue and tell her what she wanted to know.

“Valued customer? You must be joking Faust, most of the times I come I just take up space and buy nothing for hours.”

She told him so. In her entire long life, she realized that most of the time there was no meaning in sugarcoating words, and she much preferred to be direct with her own thoughts.

Faust set the mug he was polishing aside to give her a serious stare, something in his eyes made her undead heart skip an imaginary beat. She knew that gaze, she had seen it before, so many long decades ago, when her heart was still beating.

“Miss Evileye, you gave me something far more valuable than anything in this world, if it wasn’t for you, I have no idea what would have become of my child... or even my wife... you truly gave me the greatest of gifts, and I will be forever in your debt.”

He said with a dead seriousness she hardly ever saw on anyone else.

“It was just a spur of the moment, if avoiding senseless suffering costs me nothing, I don’t see why I should not do so.”

She said as she rose from her slumped position.

“Even so, you have already done more than any normal person would, I know how it feels to be looked down upon, I have been subjected to that my entire life, but to see that there exist people like you and Lord Satoru who, despite being on a complete other level, still care to avoid causing or allowing unnecessary suffering... it is something that gives me hope for the world my daughter will grow up in.”

He almost whispered as he gave her a sincere smile the likes of which she could count the number she saw on one hand.

“So, never change miss Evileye, and if I could help you in any way, even if it’s just lending an ear, I would gladly do so.”

Her mask remained firm to his words, but internally she was in turmoil, she never thought she would ever feel this way ever again. She had always been alone, ever since she lost her everything, the time she spent with the other heroes was just a drop in the bucket which is her life, and even then, she had been mostly bound by duty to do so.

Now, now she felt like she was in control of her life for the first time in a long while. Ever since she arrived to this kingdom, to this place where someone could choose to be whoever they wanted to.

Ever since she met Hilma, she had tried to understand what was the unnerving feeling eating her from within, and maybe, she just got her answer.

All this people knew who they were, knew who they wanted to be.

But her? She was no one, she had not been anyone ever since she lost all she was that fated day. She wore masks, Landfall, Evileye, nothing but masks to hide the emptiness underneath them.

She had no goal, she continued to exist just in order to live. She had no goal or purpose, she had left other decide what would be her purpose. And she accepted it readily, even eagerly, to not have to confront the all-consuming emptiness within her.

She had been alone ever since, scouring the world aimlessly.

“Here, take a sip, it’s on the house.”

The words brought her out from her depressing realization as Faust placed a mug filled with some red liquid in front of her.

“I despise alcohol.”

She said as she tried to push away the mug.

“It is very light, it’s something I came up with and turned out to be quite popular among the ladies, also... it seems like you need a drink.”

He said pushing the mug back to her.

“I don’t want to remove my mask.”

She used her last defense to try and dissuade the man from his foolish path. In all response Faust just placed a wooden straw in her drink. Apparently, her last line of defense didn’t mean anything to him.

She just glanced at the red liquid and shrugged, it was not like she could get drunk.

She slightly moved her mask away from her face just enough for the straw to slip through the gap.

She sipped her drink, she initially almost recoiled at how bitter it was, but then the bitterness dissipated almost immediately, leaving a sweet, fruited aftertaste in her mouth.

“So how was it?”

The man asked eagerly as he kept tidying up his counter.

“Bitter but also sweet, reminds me of life.”

She had no idea where that came from, it just slipped her lips, and she could not even blame the alcohol for that. It was a true statement, but something she didn’t feel like sharing regardless of what her mouth decided to do on its own.

“Well, that is pretty sad... I am still glad you have enjoyed my creation, I usually name them after the first customer to try them, so I would name this one Evileye, if you don't mind.”

She raised an eyebrow, for all the things she had and will experience in her life, her name being used for a drink was not something she expected to happen.

“Did you not say this was popular with the ladies?”

She questioned his previous statement, he chuckled as he placed his overused rag away.

“It is now.”

She could not refrain the snort from leaving her lips at his words. She took another large sip of her drink to try and mask the undignified sound.

“So, share to tell me what got you all sad and gloomy?”

He asked, she immediately prepared herself to rebut his question and leave when someone entered from the back of the bar.

A woman with blonde hair and blue eyes, she knew this woman, she was the one she had helped when she was about to give birth. The bundle cradled in her arms only corroborated her memories of her.

“Faust, you told me you would come home earlier tonight.”

She harshly whispered as she was clearly upset with her husband who just looked embarrassed and shuddered like a scolded child.

The woman scolding eyes then fell on Evileye herself before widening and shifting from her previous irritation to some sort of awe or surprise.

Evileye did not know what to say or do, so she limited herself to sip more of her drink to fill the awkward silence.

The woman slowly approached the old vampire as her eyes filled with unshed tears as she bowed her head to the magic caster.

“I could not do it before, but I wish to thank you miss Evileye, thank you for saving me and my daughter, I am not sure I could have lived if something happened to her, I have no words to convey how grateful I am to you.”

Each of her whispered words were filled with a sincerity and relief Evileye hardly saw displayed before now. She was rendered completely speechless by her heartfelt words and had no idea how she should respond to this. It had been so much time, no, maybe this never happened in her entire existence, to have someone pour their heart out to her in gratitude. The experience made her feel weird, as if she was missing something and so had no idea how to respond to her words.

The silence filled the establishment as the woman continued to weep, much to Evileye’s discomfort.

“I am glad to see you are doing well, you and your daughter both.”

The masked caster said softly as she glanced at the child, something that the woman didn’t miss despite Evileye having her face masked.

“Would you like to hold her, she is still asleep, she is a real handful, keeping us up most nights.”

The woman said with a candid smile on her face as she offered the child to her.

Evileye had no idea what to do, she never held a child before, she had no idea where to begin with.

Probably sensing her hesitance and unsurety, the mother placed her daughter against Evileye’s chest before swiftly adjusting the caster’s arms to better accommodate the child.

In just a few seconds Evileye found herself holding the child, unsure of what to do next, she looked down at the sleeping infant. She was warm, incredibly so against her dead body, she could not even remember experiencing something remotely similar to this... no, she could vaguely remember, something buried in her memories, the embrace of a doting mother and father she thought she had long forgotten.

If she was not undead, she would have probably started weeping by now.

This feeling just reminded her too much of those lost memories she had buried within in order to not lose her mind during these long decades of solitude.

The child chose that moment to open her eyes, the marks of sleeps still on her face, Evileye immediately panicked, did she wake her? Did she hold her in an incorrect way? Was she causing the infant pain?

The child opened her mouth and seemed to crack a smile in wonder at what was before her, she began to flail her short arms around until she managed to catch one of Evileye's blond locks. She stopped as she ran her small hands all over it in wonder while giggling.

"Sorry miss Evileye, she never trusted any strangers like this, it seems like she is aware that you saved her."

The mother said as she went down on her daughter, gently caressing the few blonde hair on her small head. Now that she noticed, the child was a spitting image of her mother.

"Hey little Inveria, let go of miss Evileye and come with mama."

The blonde vampire almost flinched at the name, she was the one who told it to Faust, but she never imagined they would go through with it and name her that.

Her eyes followed the child as she was cradled once more in her mother's hands even though Inveria was trying to struggle and reach for Evileye for whatever reason.

She was already missing the warmth of the child against her chest, the sense of loneliness and gloom returning to her stronger than ever before.

Evileye continued to look at the child reaching for her. The realization of her not being ever able to have one of those stabbing her like a ice-cold knife was just plunged through her dead heart.

She had always been cursed, ever since she was born. This was a mere reminder of that fact.

She felt an imaginary tear flow down her visage.

It had been a while since she felt like this, she hoped to never feel this again, that was what her distancing was meant to do, but really, what was the point if she just crumbled at the first reminder of those long lost memories?

'This world is cruel' that was a realization she had come to far too many times in her existence. She glanced up at the happy family in front of her. 'But maybe, there is a point in trying still' she couldn't help but add that traitorous thought even knowing that it would only bring further pain in the future.

{Edstrom's P.O.V.}

The silver haired woman sat alone in her room, she usually would share it with Climb, but the boy was cooling off his head in the cellar right now after he almost slashed open one guy who had been a bit too drunk and pushy with her.

She sighed, she could not believe herself, she had been always so cautious as she worked like an assassin for Eight Fingers. She never got attached, no, she was the one endearing herself to her victims before stabbing them in the back.

If her former self could look at her right now, she would spit at her in disdain. She had become so weak, so... soft, or that was what she would have said years ago.

The truth was another one. Eight Fingers was a place where comrades backstabbed each other all the time to climb up the ranks and use their power to amass money and manpower to secure their position. It was a rancid place that did not allow anyone to trust anyone else, a broken system based on cunning and cruelty. She adapted to this environment and began her own journey, but then everything changed.

Eight Fingers underwent a breakdown and reconstruction, and so Seven Hands was born. The values of this new organization were opposite to the one that came before. Where cruelty, cunning and betrayal were key parts of the organization, now those actions were scorned and those who tried to practice them still were dealt with swiftly.

Seven Hands values were based on the people who formed it, entire families worked for Seven Hands, children were taken from the street and put to work with a fair remuneration so to show them that hard work would be fairly repaid, the homeless and sick were taken in and offered a place to stay or a cure in exchange of labor and loyalty.

She had no idea how they managed to make it work, but none of those deals were broken as far as she knew. In a short amount of time the organization was flooded with desperate people who were given a hope, the remains of Eight Fingers, now completely

outnumbered and without leaders, either adapted to the system, like she did, or rebelled and died.

She had witnessed the unreal mutation as an organization filled with the scum of the kingdom was filled with mainly honest and hard-working people who were not exploited for their labor, and instead fairly compensated.

It took little time for families to sprout left and right, Seven Hands was no longer a simple work opportunity, it became an ever-growing community spanning all over the kingdom.

She had adapted too, she changed her approach as she was smart enough to recognize there was no point in fighting against the flow of change. She remained in her branch of work but began to approach people more openly, though she never lowered her guard and always made sure those she associated with were honest fools. And who was more foolish than uneducated orphans from the streets?

That was how she met Climb and the others, she used their naivety as an excuse to trust them, she would be better working with obedient children rather than fully grown adults capable of easily lying and taking advantage of her. She only meant for them to be a momentary team to shield herself from the storm of change happening around her.

And then she got attached, her stupid heart got attached to those brats and their naïve and cheerful demeanor. A true foolish move on her part on hindsight, what kind of idiot got attached to her meat shields?

And now here she was, she had seen her group falling apart. One died in a stampede, another killed himself, and the other one was a broken thing who snapped at shadows. And then there was her, a fool who should just drop it all and start anew, but she could not

bring herself to do so, because she was a fool who got attached to those brats.

She felt like bashing her head against the wall until she beats the idiotic sentiments out of her.

She glared at the empty bed in the same room as her.

'Fuck this!' she stood up from her bed and marched outside her room, only one destination in mind. She marched down the stairs ignoring all greetings and looks she received.

She threw the cellar's door open as she marched inside. She moved directly for her prey, the boy currently sitting in a fetal position in one of the corners.

He didn't even glance up at her, something that pained and angered her at the same time. Without a word she forced him up and pinned him between the wall and her forcing him to meet her gaze. He did not protest against any of her moves.

"Why the fuck did you do that?"

She asked in a whisper, she wanted him to tell her something stupid, like he was being possessive or some other crap. She needed to know that he just was as bad as she was. She needed to know that she could just leave without remorse, to know she could run away from this cruelty and never have a reason to look back.

Her eyes never broke contact as she continued to stare in that empty blue abyss of pain and misery she had to deal with for weeks by now.

And yet, he did not utter a single word, he did not make a single sound.

“I can protect myself, and you know it, so tell me the truth, you did it because you want me! Because I am yours! Because you want to possess me!”

She knew she was being unfair, she was being unreasonable, borderline manipulative. But she needed him to admit to any of those things. She needed to hear those words so that she could bury her heart and leave this misery behind her and feel justified in doing so. No matter if those justifications came from a manipulated barely teen boy.

He continued to look at her, he almost seemed absent, as if he didn't even hear her words, his lips parted even if no sound came from them for a few instants.

“I did it... because you are all I have left.”

He said emotionlessly as he slowly moved to hug her.

She knew it was wrong, she knew she needed to get away, to deny him, but her body refused to do as her brain instructed. She felt those short arms wrap around her as much as they could, while his head was buried in her chest as he hugged her to him with a desperation she had never seen before.

“Everyone left me, mother, I was too weak and naïve to save, Rina, I was too slow and weak to save, Cris, I was too self-centered and weak to save... I know I am weak and worthless, I can't save anyone, I know that eventually, you are going to leave too... but, I don't want you to, I don't want to let anyone leave anymore.”

Those were probably more words than she heard from him in an entire month combined. She always wanted for him to speak up, but that was quite a poor decision on hindsight, for those words teared her apart alongside her resolve to be something more.

If this was Eight Fingers she would have been eaten alive only to entertain the thought. But this wasn't Eight Fingers, and she no longer was that person, no matter how much she tried to prove the opposite. The mastermind fell to her own tricks.

She should have just left, took everything and go away from here without leaving a trace. But she knew that would have made the rest of her life a miserable hell.

She felt the boy sobbing in her chest. She could do nothing but gently rest her arms around him and provide the comfort she could.

“I am not going to leave, that's a promise Climby-boy.”

She never stood a chance, her resolve simply wasn't enough, maybe it had been at a certain point, but not after more than two years.

She had no other options but give up on those ambitions.

‘I will protect you, even against this cruel and cold world, even if it costs me everything I have’ she swore in her mind, finally letting die that fragment of her former self.

And in a dirty cellar, with a crying boy wrapped in her arms, she was reborn.

{Alysanne's P.O.V.}

The second princess of the Re-Estize Kingdom continued to look down at the floor of her room as she did for countless hours in the last days.

That was all she had in her life, the solitude and peace of her room. She gave up on anything else. How could she not? She had been only scorned if not outright hated since her birth, nobody gave a damn about her, she was used by her father like a political tool and

tied to a man who preferred the company of children to hers and valued her younger bastard sister more than his betrothed.

She thought she had found friendship in her solitude, she even dared to think she found love in the gentle embrace and stolen kisses in a garden from a man which wasn't meant to be her husband.

But apparently this world couldn't allow her to even have that much. She had been betrayed even when she thought life was for once turning her way.

Oh, how she wished to claw her eyes out if only that could let her unsee what she had witnessed. If only she could have lived in ignorant bliss one more day. But she could not unsee the image of the one she thought only loved her wildly fornicate with the one she thought her friend.

The sole image brought pain to her shattered heart and new tears grew fat in her eyes. By now she thought her body consumed them all after crying three days straight but, judging from her blurring vision, it seemed she was mistaken.

She could not get the sound of the fornications out of her head, the grunts, the moans, and the images replayed in her mind.

She stood up, her eyes meeting a bunch of flowers she had planted in a vase and taken care of for months. A gift, a gift from her secret admirer... a gift from... she refused to even think his name!

Uncaring of all her lessons, of all the lies she was thought growing up, uncaring of her own safety, she kicked the vase sending it shattering on the floor.

She almost fell over due to the movement and her unpractical gown. In a fit of madness she lunged for the flower, now sprawled

on the ground, and grasped her uncaring of the sharp vase fragments digging in her flesh.

She marched to the lit fireplace and threw them among the flame with all the spite she could gather in her heart.

She looked as the flowers burned and became scorching cinders in mere seconds.

Her eyes then shifted to the window, the window that gave on her balcony, the balcony that gave on one of the gardens, it was quite an height from there, maybe...

The door of her room slammed open, interrupting her train of thought as Angelica barged into her room.

The young noble girl had been with her when they discovered Clarice's and that scoundrel's betrayal. She had been the one to try and take care of her ever since the princess confined herself to her rooms.

Angelica was her only remaining friend, the only one who didn't betray her in her life, yet. Her treacherous mind added the last word on that sentiment.

She did not even see the noble reach her, but somehow she was already by her side, inspecting her and gasping at her bleeding hand were the vase fragments seemed to have cut deep.

"Alys! We need to find a healer! Right now! This is not good!"

The blonde noble cried out as she tried to stop her blood flow with her own dress.

As if she cared, she would gladly bleed out if it meant putting an end to this torment.

Her eyes again shifted toward the window, an eager and maddening desire taking form in her mind once more.

“W-why don’t we go outside t-tomorrow? I think leaving t-this room would be good, y-you didn’t eat anything these last days... I know a place renown for its ice cream! I think you would love it!”

The girl said as she seemingly followed her gaze to the window.

Well, that sounded rather nice, she might enjoy one last ice cream, if that was all this cruel world would offer her.

**A.N.**

**Here we have it folks! The blond depressed trio! Jokes aside, yeah I know... pretty sad intermission, but hey, Overlord never was such an happy world to begin with.**

**As always, I am eager to hear your thoughts, so leave a review / comment!**

**Stay safe! Till next time!**