1806 Shadow in Distress

Seeing that a literal Saint had fallen from the sky, the approaching Knights froze and looked away in embarrassment - or rather, they tried.

However, they were too mesmerized by Neph's appearance. With her beautiful white wings, tousled silver hair, and flawless figure, she looked nothing short of stunning. It was as if a celestial deity had suddenly descended into the mortal world, illuminating it with her pure light.

Additionally, she wasn't wearing her usual elegant attire or polished armor. Instead, she was dressed in simple clothes made out of soft white fabric, which seemed almost like loungewear, and contoured the graceful lines of her body well.

Too well, maybe...

Suddenly, Sunny felt an overwhelming impulse to walk in front of Nephis and shield her from their gazes, instead.

‘What are you staring at, bastards?'

To be fair, there was nothing lascivious in their gazes. Instead, the Knights were strangely stuck between embarrassment, admiration, and a bit of remnant contempt directed at Sunny, It was a funny sight.

"...What is going on here?"

Neph's voice was cold, and her expression was stern. White sparks danced in her piercing grey eyes.

The Knights shivered, instantly losing their rancor.

"N-nothing, Lady Nephis."

"We apologize for our rudeness."

"Please don't mind us..."

She scowled.

"If there is nothing going on, then I suggest you be on your way."

Her voice was even, but the seasoned Knights suddenly turned pale. A moment later, they were gone... it was quite amazing, actually. The skills of these warriors were truly formidable - if Sunny did not know any better, he would have thought that they were blown away by the wind!

'What a splendid movement technique...'

Knights of Valor were known for their indomitability in battle, but it seemed that they knew a thing or two about how to retreat, as well.

While he was considering admiring their swift withdrawal, Nephis huffed quietly and turned to him. Her scornful expression instantly disappeared, replaced by a subtle look of concern.

She lingered for a moment.

"I am sorry, Are you alright?"

Sunny couldn't help but gaze at her deeply, taking in every little detail of her, Eventually, he remembered himself and answered In a slightly stifled tone:

"Ah... yes. I am fine."

Then, he tilted his head a little, glanced at the distant silhouette of the Ivory Island, and looked back at Nephis.

"I'm sory, Lady Nephis... but did you just jump down after noticing that I'm in trouble?"

He had not put two and two together immediately, but now that he took a better look at her, there were a few strange details. Her comfortable clothes, unkempt hair, and slight signs of agitation were far from the composed image Nephis usually presented to the public.

So, it wasn't hard to surmise that this appearance had not been planned.

Nephis froze for a moment, glanced down at herself, then awkwardly swiped a lock of her hair back, putting it behind her ear.

Sunny could have sworn that she blushed a little.

"Ah... well. I happened to be free when Cassie informed me that something was afoot. So... here I am."

She studied his face to make sure that everything was indeed alright, then looked at the pack in his hands in confusion.

"That said, what exactly happened? She only told me that you were taken to the main keep."

Her expression hardened.

"Did someone harass you? Was it my sister? What did she say?"

Sunny remained silent for a few moments, not knowing how to answer.

Eventually, he gave her a reassuring smile.

"Oh, no, nothing like that. Nobody harassed me. 1 was indeed summoned by Princess Morgan, but for a different reason. It's... well, I'm not sure how to say it..."

Neph's frown only deepened.

"A... different reason, you say? What reason might that be?"

Sunny coughed.

"Well, it's like this. She made me a Knight of Valor."

He did not know what Nephis had expected to hear, but it definitely wasn't this. For a moment, she seemed startled.

"What?"

He smiled helplessly.

"It's how I said. I was given the title of a Knight and the post of the Knight Commander of the Ardent Wardens. Oh... the Ardent Wardens are a group of volunteers who do community service, mainly taking care of the elderly. Yeah... I was told that my only responsibility is to maintain the prestige of the royal family... whatever that means..."

Nephis stared at him for a while, then sighed and covered her face with a hand. After a few moments of silence, she said in a flat tone:

"I am sorry. It's my fault... they were probably unhappy with me dating a man of no background. I expected opposition... but who would have thought that Morgan would be so accommodating?"

Sunny blinked a couple of times.

"Oh. So it's because of my lowly background. I see."

She lowered her hand and looked at him with a startled expression.

"No! I didn't mean it like that."

Sunny smiled.

"I know. You're not a conceited person. If anything... to be honest, between the two of us, I am probably more of a bigot. I actually have quite a prejudice against the Legacy clans. Although... it might be a bit bold of me, to admit something like that while attempting to court a princess of a Great Clan. Oh well, what can I do? That just goes to show how the lack of pedigree results in a lack of common sense and decorum..."

Hearing his lighthearted tone, Nephis relaxed a little. She lingered a little, then met his smile with a tentative one of her own.

"Then... I am grateful that you are willing to put your prejudice aside and give this princess a chance, You are an admirably broad-minded person, Master Sunless."

He laughed.

"No one has ever accused me of being broad-minded before. It's just that I would have to be mad to let my pettiness stand in the way of seeing you, Lady Nephis."

Then, he suddenly froze.

'Right'

Weren't they supposed to go on a date in a few days?

Meeting her today, therefore, was a bit awkward. What was he supposed to do? Pretend that they had not made plans? Or try to woo her right now?

Noticing his puzzlement, Nephis asked:

"What's wrong?"

Sunny hesitated for a few moments.

"No, it's nothing. It's just that... to be honest, I've been thinking about our date a lot. Constantly, even. I've been looking forward to it so much that meeting you all of a sudden is a bit of a shock. Well... I know that you are terribly busy, Lady Nephis. So, I'll see you in a few days?"

She looked at him silently for a while.

Then, she smiled subtly.

"Actually, I'm not that busy, How about we just make it today?”