(Nathan POV)

We were both staring at each other nonstop. He was still holding the crossbow in place but his hands were shaky.

"I have to do it" He whispered.

"No you do not" I emphasized.

"YES I HAVE TO I DO NOT HAVE ANY OTHER CHOICE" this time it was a shout

"We always have choices Aashok. It's just what we see as the most convenient that we mostly chose." I stole Sister's most favorite line.

"That may be true. \*sob\* Then I choose to do this and there is nothing you can do about it" He steeled his resolve and shot.

The circumstances were all in my favour. He was an inexperienced kid who had never even held a cross bow before lest kill someone. Moreover, by the looks of it he was being forced. So, his heart was not in it. Combining all the factors, his arms got shaky and his aim was way off. I dived a bit to the right and the arrow missed.

"Don't do this Aashok" I yelled at him

Seeing his arrow get missed, he panicked. He quickly pulled out another arrow from the little bag that was hanging around his shoulder. I could have, if I tried, reached him before he had loaded another arrow but I chose not to.

"Do not make yourself a criminal Aashok"

"I don't have another choice."

"I told you that a person always has .... Forget it. We will never get anywhere like this. Let me guess. They said that if you will not do their bidding, they would kill your mom, right?" Upon hearing these words, he froze.

"Looks like I hit the spot" I said.

He had loaded the arrow, which he shot at me. His hands were steadier but his aim was still off and I had trained for this. So, another dive and the arrow went pass me out of the cloth shelter.

"They are never going to keep their end of the bargain and I can prove that to you." I tried to persuade him but it did not look as any of my persuasions were getting through.

"Aashok listen to me. Those people are not going to let you or your mother go. And I can prove it to you. Just put down the bow and l...…"

"LIAR. YOU ARE A LIAR\*SOB\*. HE SAID THAT \*SOB\* not ONLY he will let us go but \*SOB\* he will also pay us if I kill you. He said that he can cure mom as well. SO I HAVE TO KILL YOU RIGHT HERE AND NOW \*SOB\*" Tears started streaming down his cheeks. He was not ready for any of this

(Poor kid. Being dragged down into a war that is much bigger then himself)

"He is not going to do any of that Aashok. And that is because ...…." I could not say it. I knew very well how it felt. He was just a kid living a very happy life until a few months ago. He was not ready for any of this. ".... He is not going to save your mom ...….. Because she is already dead." I had to say it. The kid had to know.

"W...h...wa.....what?" I saw all the hope that was in the eyes of the little boy crumble.

"Yes this is the truth Aashok. Your mother is dead. I have already checked it."

"NO, NO, NO, NO. YOU ARE LYING. MY MOTHER IS ALIVE AND I WILL SAVE HER." He pointed the cross bow towards me again.

"Don't be a fool Aashok. Your mother is dead and that is a fact. Do not fall for the lies he has told you." I tried to persuade him but it was not going too well.

"You are lying. You do not know anything." He shook his head violently.

"That is not true. I know the guy who told you to do all this stuff. And I also know that he is here with us this very moment, hiding so that he might finish me if you fail to do so."

"Wha-what?" this time I caught his attention.

"Yes I am telling the truth. Shall I prove it to you?" I asked. Then I turned and said, "So are you coming in now. I need to prove to this kid that I am right. Although it's useless to hide now but I shall give the option to choose."

The curtain of the tent rose and a man entered.

"How did you know that it was me?" He asked

"Your punch gave you up. None of my subjects can punch me you know that. But you punched me straight and it hurt like hell." I simply said. In front of me was standing the big burly man who was holding little Aashok down on the ground about half a day a go.

"AAh ... sorry! My bad then I guess. That was a mistake on my part but pay no heed to it because that mistake will not hinder my real plan. You will die here Kizen von Gazell Arcadia and no one will come to save you." He grinned at me. "You set a trap to lure me out but fell into it yourself. Now there are no guards here with you and you are alone. Now Aashok do your thing and take away your reward." He shouted

"Is what Kizen said, true?" Now Aashok was having doubts.

"Of course not. He is just lying to save his own skin. I told you that before didn't I. He will do anything to save his own life. That is just the kind of person he is. Every-one in the kingdom knows that. He used to torture the city people just to have fun. You are doing this kingdom a favour by killing him. Do it quick." He walked towards where Aashok was standing and patted on his shoulder.

"I-I-I-I ...…" The kid was confused.

"Don't trust him. I beg you Aashok"

"I want to see my mother first." He demanded.

(Finally)

"Why? Don't you trust me? I have told you that I will pay you if you do this job. Or is it that you want to get your mom killed." The man gave Aashok a devilish smile.

"N-n-n-NO." Said Aashok "First tell me whether Kizen is telling the truth or not"

"Of for the love of ...….. They do always say that if you want to do something right then do it your-self." And with that the man pushed Aashok aside and took his cross bow. "Yes he is telling the truth. The woman is dead." He punched Aashok. The kid hit his head and fainted. "And now it's his tur...…" And he pointed that thing at me.

Patience was never one of my strong suites. The moment I thought he was going to take charge of the assassination plan himself, I had already moved. Kizen's body although was weak but he had made it somewhat sturdy by hardwork. And with all my knowledge of combat, I was near the man before he could finish the word 'dead'. And in the next moment I intercepted the crossbow. According to their knowledge, Kizen was a good for nothing, playboy who could not do a thing. So, he considered those missed arrows luck and inexperience of Aashok and paid any heed. So, when he saw me getting close to him and holding his wrist, he got startled. He tried to get some distance between us, I simply stepped on his foot causing him to lose balance and fall. He let the cross bow lose and fell with a thud on the ground.

"Now what shall we do with you?" He looked up in my eye as I said that to him while holding the crossbow pointed towards his head.

"How did you do that?" He was flabbergasted

"It's easy you know. I just waited for the moment when your attention will not be on me and ran at full speed, The key point was to stay low so that I would be out of your immediate line of sight and when I reached you I ..." I tried to explain it to him but he was never had any intention of listening.

"THAT IS NOT WHAT I AM ASKING" he shouted. "You are supposed to be a useless nincompoop. Our Intel said that you could not even ride a horse. What you did right now is a feat that can only be accomplished by trained people, soldiers. So how did you do it?" He asked desperately

"Hmmmm ...… well! Seems like your intel was outdated." I smiled at him. I turned my head a little towards Aashok "Hey kid are you alrig...…." But this time it was my mistake. Even if I had taken control over the situation I should never had let my guard down. I simply forgot the fact that the guy standing in front of me was a trained warrior. The moment I took my eyes off of him, He pulled a ball out of somewhere and before I could do something

\*BOOM\*

There was a loud bang and then smoke

\*COUGH COUGH\*

The smoke blinded me and went into my lungs. It had a foul smell and caused me to cough uncontrollably. I fell on the ground and grabbed my chest. The curtain of the tent lifted and I heard the running steps of a person.

(Shit!!!! He is getting away, I need to catch him)

I Got up and followed the voice as my eyes were useless for the moment. I got out of the tent running. It took only but a moment for my eyes to adjust to the outside light. The explosion had caused a crowd to gather around the tent. I took a view of my surroundings and saw the man running in a direction.

"MOVE" I shouted, and the people cleared the way. I pulled many small orbs from my pocket and tossed them towards the running man. He was well aware of his surroundings and by changing his direction, he dodged all the orbs. Where ever they fell, they burst into sparks of fire which raised high into the sky and blasted like fireworks.

"That would have hurt a lot. Glad that your aim is just as bad as our intel told us." Some obvious piece of mockery it was. "Good luck catching me your highn...…. Ughhhhh" The moment he turned his head, an arrow hit him in the leg and he fell head first.

"Seems like you have forgotten that I had a crossbow on me." Now it was my turn to mock him.

There was still a little distance between us. He took advantage of that. The moment he fell down, taking the edge of his momentum he rolled on the ground. There were many bystanders looking at the ongoing drama. The man rolled and he grabbed a child by the neck and pulled out a knife.

"Your highness, I advise that you stop right there or else I will kill this kid." He put the knife on his neck.

I stopped but still pointed my crossbow at the man.

"This is not going to get you anywhere you know that." I said.

"Yes" He replied "But it will destroy your repute, if there is any. What will the press say I wonder .... 'the king of arcadia, killer of a ...."He paused for a moment "What is your name kid" He asked the scared kid. The kid did not reply "I ASKED WHAT IS YOUR NAME" He shouted this time.

"L-L-L-Lien" The little girl was scared as hell

"Ahhhhh. What a beautiful name!!!! Lien. So as I was saying 'Kizen, the ruler of Arcadia killed a little girl named Lien' how does that sound?" He asked. I did not reply.

"HMMMMM? Seems like the motivation is just not enough." He drew a line on the girl's neck and blood started to trickle down. The girl got all teary eyed.

"Okay okay I will not shoot. just let the girl go." I raised my hands up one of which was still holding the bow.

"Throw the bow here." The man quiet literally commanded me. I was hesitant at first but looking at the girl and then her mother, all my hesitation faded and I simply did as was told.

"Now that is a good boy." He picked the bow. "Now do me another favour and stand still will you" And he fired. The shot was lethal. It was aimed at my leg. I did try to dodge but could not completely and the arrow left a wound on my leg.

"UGHH" I fell on the ground with my one knee touching the floor. When I tried to get up something touched my head.

"Better stay down your highness. I never thought that you will be so much of an Idiot. Giving yourself up for just a little girl. Pathetic. Now you will die and I may not make it out alive but Arcadia will fall. I made sure to check that none of your guards were around so, no one is coming to your rescue. You sure are an Idiot you know that." He said. I immediately looked up. Ours eyes met.

"No I did not know that. That is NEWS to me. So, are you going to shoot or should I send an invitation." A tick mark appeared on his forehead

"No, there is no need for an invitation"

\*SWISH\*

The arrow was fired and then blood covered my vision.