76: Guardian of the garden

(Nathan POV)

It was a pleasant feeling. U know sitting high up like a kind and looking down on your subjects. Ahhh I loved it. I mean, it made one feel special. And who does not like feeling special? So, as I said, I was sitting in a high place nibbling on meat. Where did I get that? Well, I imagined it. Who were my subjects and why was I sitting like that? Hmm seems as if there's been a time skip. Well, to be short, I was sitting on a high cliff preparing myself to go further down the lane and the seventy tigers that had attacked me were now wagging their tails like dogs in front of me. How did that happen? Well simple enough. I was pretty dumb. I mean I was in my mindscape. MY MINDSCAPE. Everything here belonged to me, and it was mine to control. So were these tigers. I mean Why was I trying to fight them in the first place? If they are here, then that means they are protecting my mind. And they thought of me as an intruder. So, they attacked me. And I fought them like a madman. Nearly died before I had a sudden realization that this was all my imagination. So, what if I thought that they were all obeying me? And that was what I did. The results were, let's say, refreshing.

Nut it was getting late. I had been in this world for go God knows how long. And I needed to get back. I had no idea how to do that. The only thing that came to mind was going even deeper. If these animals were here, then that could only mean they were protecting something. And what was there to protect in a mindscape? Memories. So I got off my self-made throne and started to walk towards the darkness inside the cave. The tigers literally started to whimper.

"Hey, let me go now and go back to doing your duties," I said with annoyance. And they did as were commanded.

Walking down the cave, I had to imagine a torch into existence to see even my hands. That was the level of darkness in there. I mean I could have imagined it to go away or light to appear but for some reason, it was not working like that. This darkness was a part of my mindscape. A defense mechanism for anyone who tried to infiltrate. And simply imagining it to go away would not work. If I wanted to change anything here, I had to go to the core. But why would I try to change anything here? It was all perfect. A perfect defense. The desert, the maze in the mountains, and all those tigers. It was all perfect. I was only able to get here because it was my mind and I kind of knew where to go. Or else it would have been impossible to even get out of the desert. Now the only question was, how did everything here come into being? I mean, I never practiced occlumency and Arthur had used legilimency on me without any problem. Now if he had broken through all these defenses just to talk to me without me even noticing, then damn he was good. But I don't think that was the case. Talking to myself I kept walking until suddenly bright light hit my face. For a second I was blinded. I brought my hand in front of my face to block the light subconsciously. It took a moment for my eyes to get used to the light. But as soon as they did, I noticed that once again the scenery had changed. This time it was a beautiful garden. Like a really really beautiful garden. There were so many flowers there that I did not know the names of even half of them. I was not the type to compliment flowers, but the garden was really beautiful. I turned around to look back at the cave ¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬¬I just came through but now there was none. I was staring at empty air. I looked down and there was no floor. Yes. A few centimeters from where I was standing, there was no floor. My body responded immediately and I jumped back. That took me by surprise.

"I could have fallen." I slowly walked towards the edge and looked down. And just as I had thought there was nothing. I could not see the end of it. That would have been a bad way to die. Looking at that I immediately understood why some legilimence lost their sanity while infiltrating the mind of others. If someone fell down from here, it was a no return, He would probably be stuck in my mindscape, falling for all eternity while his body rots outside my mind. It was kind of scary. I turned around and took a glance at the garden. It was beautiful. Right in the center was a giant stalk. There was an uncountable number of wines twisting and intertwining themselves to gather to form a giant tower. I knew that was where I had to go. Don't ask me how, I just did. Slowly I started to walk toward the center.

"Why do I feel like this is not going to be as easy as it seems." And boy was I right or what.

"SO YOU FINNALY CAME HAAAANNNNN? I HAVE MISSED YOU, MY DEAR NATHAN." A too annoyingly familiar voice shook my eardrums and I had to accept I was not expecting to hear that voice, at least not here. Turning towards the origin of the sound I shouted. "WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE."

"I LIVE HERE." He replied.

Now he was standing in front of me. It was my first time looking at the face of the accursed thing that had been on my mind since that day. Right now, in front of me was the physical form of the origin of the sound that was always in my head. The reason I was in here trying to make my mental defenses stronger. He was the guardian of this garden. Immediately, I felt my rage boil up trying to break through. The first reason for that was his presence. The thing that was the reason for all my worries and the thing due to which I was here trying to build up my defenses, was actually acting as the guardian of all that I was trying to protect from him. I was speechless. But it was his appearance that shook me the most. I mean I had imagined to a certain extent that he would look like this but still. Seeing it in person was more disturbing. He looked like me. Exactly to the smallest detail. The only difference was that he was the exact opposite of me. Where my hair was silvery white his were jet black. He also had black eyes. All those features and my face made him closely resemble Sebas.

"Do you always look like that or is it some idea you had for a prank." I pointed aurora towards him.

"As much as I would like to lie and tell you that it is my idea of a prank, I can't because you will know immediately when I lie. So, no. It is not my idea of a prank. I just look like this." He bowed like a musician after his show and smirked. What happened next was all impulsive. Without a second thought, I lunged at him. Pulling out both my swords I slashed at him. But he was gone. My sword met air.

(Where...…..)

And then I don't know how I knew but I raised my sword above my head and immediately.

\*CLANG\*

Our swords clashed. He had jumped high in the sky and attacked me from above. I had known what he was going to do. HOW?

"You are thinking how you knew what I was going to do right?" I immediately looked toward him.

(How does he know what I am thinking....)

And then I realized something. It was not that he knew what I was thinking. I also knew the next move he was going to do.

"Yes that's right We are connected, my brother. We are the same." He smirked.

I knew he was telling the truth because we were connected. I knew what he was thinking and he knew what my next move would be. And there was one thing that both of us knew. The guy standing in front of me was stronger than me. Like way more.

This time he raised his sword toward me.

"I wanted to do this so bad." He laughed.

"I am thoroughly fucked aren't I?"

"Yes, indeed you are my dear owner."