**Chapter 9: Royalty of the land below**

‘Gaia's votum’ : A praying to the unknown god

Morning comes quickly after, with Blood Claw still sleeping from what drained him the night before. I strongly believe that this location has purposefully left no trace of mana in the air.

The trees outside produce only rotten fruits, and the corrosion affects the entire community. Should I use a holy spell to turn this around? It will only blow our cover as travelers, but leaving will cause our tract to be left behind.

If I had used that artifact, the situation would not have been so dire. My authority does not extend to healing or wrapping reality, hence a high holy spell is required in this scenario.

The magic "Gaia's votum" activates when I focus on people around me, and the corrosion outside fades away altogether. Crack alongside the wall, the livelihood improves as I pour more mana over it, but usage is rather low because I still can't utilize this spell.

Already learn by heart every spell in the library, including some that are so foreign that not even I can use them as the creator wishes. Such as this spell, which derives from the invocation of a long-forgotten deity of a foreign place, little is known about it, and even when the writer or pa is questioned, the origin changes from preceptive to preceptive.

The only certainty is that it is derived from a different system than all of this world's species of mana, and that prayer, as it was similar but not quite known as "pure intention," as it stated, will not be deciphered any time soon.

Demons don't require a lot of energy from material food, do they? As Blood Claw has shown in the cave the previous two days, he does not appear to be hungry or in need of sustenance. The only time he exhibits concern is this morning when the mana is running low. As the condensed mana from the air returns to its original amount, he sleeps soundly.

As the innkeeper makes the wonderful berry pancakes, I go down to dine, and she serves me a dish as an "add-on service" reserved for exceptional visitors. The smell of being drowned in sugar rather than the few berries surrounding it; the flavor is not as horrible as the smell. I finish it only to discover the innkeeper bringing another.

"Will your dragon companion join us?" The innkeeper inquires, her sour face fixed on my empty dish as she carefully removes it.

"He is sleeping; you do not disturb him by doing unnecessary chores." I push the platter of fresh pancakes away, refusing to have another.

"OK, just checking." As the silence returns to the deserted inn, she removes the platter. The light advances slowly as it approaches noon, and customers walk up and down the inn. I merely stay and stare, waiting for prospective pursuers.

"Just so you know, the weather is perfect for a walk today." The innkeeper walks up to my table, holding a new cup of beer, and gives it to me as a complimentary. As soon as the alcohol enters my body, it is transformed into a bitter liquid similar to coffee. Its hallucination content quickly being cleansed by this body's unique physic.

"I'm not sure what you're thinking; because my friend isn't here, it's best if you disclose what's on your mind." I set the alcoholic drink down on the table, thoroughly caught up in her play. Is it better if she drops it before I make her? Her demeanor would be too keen for an elderly human woman, lest she is a skilled warrior or a halfling.

"The structure of the magic you cast this dawn is so foreign. Were you a speculative traveler?" The innkeeper demonstrates her expertise in magic by waving her arms as if casting a spell. Keep an eye on my reaction to the most basic way of performing a spell in this land.

"I am one to some extent." "Since you're having fun, how about I have mine?" I respond reluctantly, but enough to pique her interest in theorizing.

"Of course, ask away." She washes the cup before serving fresh customers. Anyone entering would be tempted to relax their guard due to the mixed-race crowd and the friendly mood.

"Are you a halfling?" And you see through our deception, don't you?" Her disposition responded in the most non-chantant way conceivable.

"A customer is a customer, regardless of your history, as long as you keep it to yourself." Is that what you're suggesting, archangel?" She exposes those words by whispering because the secret is only meant to be shared between the two of us. She is wiser than anyone I know to pick up on such weird cues, that I have been careful not to give up too much.

"That is then an agreement. Oh, and if you happen to spill any." After finishing my drink, I proceed to the room. Her voice echoes through a form transmission spell as I walk down the corridor. She means no hindrance because she now confirms my intention to keep my secret.

"Don't worry; I intend to expand to the other side of the world as well." "I can't die so quickly." Those words were magically transferred to me, what a cheeky little thing she is.

Since I left the room for morning scouting, Blood Claw has been packing. The clothing is scattered throughout the room, indicating that he has initially avoided using sub-space magic; there are parchments and quills on the ground as well, suggesting that he must try to write a letter of recommendation because I decide to speed up the plan too soon.

Coming over to the backpack that was placed in the corner of the room. There are a few pieces of child clothing, a small journal with a monocle attached, and a quill pen to make up the contents. The cover is stitched by a layer of cheap leather, and it looks nothing like the dark magic books in the library.

"Is this the new backpack you have prepared for me?" I inquire as I pick it up; the design is quite simple so that it does not attract thieves and bandits.

"It will be, I haven't finished packing it yet." Besides, I need to give the prince some room on that bag." Blood Claw sighs and says. This is not the first time he has had to carry his prince's bag.

"As a tribute, right?" I examine it throughout.

"You're guessing fast, Mikhail," His nods indicate confirmation.

"Would he teleport close to here or something?" The innkeeper has long been aware of the act of illusion, and I doubt she will be able to keep it quiet for us for long." The fact that even a halfling can see the spell I cast this morning concerns me.

The elves, as angels' devotees, keep a close eye on each of us as we descend or perform miracles. They are especially annoying because they will not change their minds about learning. Even if I said something, it would all come out as forbidden knowledge because they were covering their knife ears. They are the epitome of what pa and ma expect from mortals below naive and treasure every word from their egoist's mouth.

"He said to meet you just outside the village because I insisted on your comfort." "Will your brother be here this soon?" Blood Claw pauses for a moment to ascertain my reaction.

"I can keep my promise that I will be able to handle him." He spends the rest of his time packing. I remain silent as the morning sun shines boldly down the window below. Why can't Pa think of a better escape route than this instead of raining his ridiculous wrath down on these helpless people?

As the sun sets in the sky above, I return the key to the innkeeper while Blood Claw goes out to buy something. I walk out to the village's side exit, this cloth he's chosen for me. The dirt-bound cloak inside, as well as the white dress that plays down the knee, barely cover the rest of my feet. Isn't Blood Claw on board with the pure maiden his prince fantasizes about?

The prince, dressed as a human bard, has been waiting for us. His disguised form is more consistent and detailed than Blood Claw ones. He was able to conceal the odor of pheromone if he possessed one. It's just a theory, but he's an ancient type of incubus descended directly from Lady Lilith, the mother of succubus. It is not my place to investigate at this time.

"It's time for you to seal the deal, little angel." The prince gives me a mischievous smile and a gentle one to Blood Claw. I am nothing more than a stand-in for his royal duty. It's fine, at the very least, to be close to my ideal life.

"I know, my lord, let us depart," I reply in a monotone voice.

Before the teleport is finished, I feel a surge of bloodthirst directed at me...no, at them. Are they too preoccupied with the spell to notice? In any case, it was quickly dismissive once the spell was finished. 'Saudade’ , a new land appears before my eyes.

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I've lost them as easily as they've taken my brother away. I shouldn't have slept on that day; it should have been just a short nap, but it turned into a full day's rest. I'll never be able to forgive myself unless I bring Mikhail back.

Figures of demons, incubuses, and tanarukks are quite a rare pair, but the land of lust has long been in collaboration with the land of wrath, and those are common enough not to raise an eyebrow because both of them lack the title "lord." They are not royalty too because Ars Goetia's replica has not responded to them.

Should I have taken him back from that street last night or from the inn this morning? Mikhail has a tender soul because he dislikes blood and would not put his hand in the blood of any of the demon's victims. Their response has been poisoning, promising forbidden knowledge...no, he has said nothing is forbidden except for one body to handle. He couldn't have been brainwashed that easily, could he?

Please, Mikhail, wait for me. As this little brother will not give up on saving you, regardless of which blood this spear is drowning in. The god's spear, I swear on my name and title.

The sun is already high in the sky... He should have been calling by now. Speaking of the devil, he has already received the message.

"Have you discovered it yet?" Azazel's voice can be heard on the other end of the transmission.

"Fourth, I have found my brother." You don't need to prepare the army just yet." "I will take back my brother," I assure him.

**The end**