
Chapter 14: What's To Come

Grandpa Virion, Tessia, Rinia and I were currently all situated around a circular table with a jar of water in the middle.

"Umm... Elder Rinia? You said that you were a diviner, correct? I'm a little lost as to what it is you can do. Gramps said that I'd be able to find out if my parents are okay by seeing you." I asked, staring curiously at the jar of water.

"Kekeke! Gramps huh? Virion, you've really let yourself go if you're letting youngsters like him call you that," she snickered.

"Bah! He's an exception! If any other brat dares to call me something like Gramps, I'll have them hung upside down and beaten with a cactus!" he grinned back, looking at me.

How painfully descriptive.

Glaring at me, she barked, "Brat! You don't even know where your parents are but you want to travel all over Sapin, find them and then come back to train? You'd be already dead by the time you make yourself back here."

I looked at Grandpa Virion. Did he tell her? Almost as if he knew what I was thinking, he chuckled. "I didn't tell Rinia any of this. There isn't much you can hide from her, but usually she doesn't bother looking into a person. What made you so nosy Rinia?" Gramps said, directing a worried gaze towards the elderly lady.

"You and I both know he's special. So special, in fact, that there are parts of his life that even I can't see. Arthur, whatever the beast that passed its will onto you is, it's not an ordinary beast. Limiting it to an SS class wouldn't give it justice." She pondered for a bit before continuing.

"Enough about that, though. Arthur, you're here to see your parents so that's what I'll help you do. Close your eyes for a moment and picture your parents. Focus on their appearance and their mana signature. I'll take care of the rest."

I closed my eyes and imagined the last scene I had of them both together: my father badly wounded and my mother healing him.

"Okay, you can open your eyes now."

I looked at her to see the color of her eyes swirling. The water was floating out of the jar and was swirling around, forming a spiraling disk. Suddenly, I see my parents in the water.

The chair I was sitting on is flipped back as I bolted up, leaning as close to the table. I saw my mother and father together, sitting around a dining table. It didn't seem to be our home in Ashber. My mother's face was a bit paler and was currently saying something to my father. I could see she's lost a bit of weight but otherwise looked pretty healthy. Her stomach! It's pretty evident now that she was pregnant by the fairly noticeable bulge on her belly. My father looked the same! He's wearing some kind of uniform now though and was sporting a beard.

I could feel hot tears running uncontrollably down my face at this point, as I didn't dare peeling my eyes off of the image of my parents.

They're alive! They're doing okay! They're fine.

"T-thank you Elder Rinia. Thank you truly for showing me this," I managed a sniffled stammer.

She looked a little uncomfortable at my sincerity and just waved it off.

"Ahem! Let me see where they are now."

The image zoomed out and I could see the outside of where they're living. Just as I had suspected, it was definitely not our home in Ashber. Zooming out even more, I could see the layout of the city that they're staying in.

"It seems like they've made their home in Xyrus. That makes things simpler for us." She says, a content look on her face.

Tess, obviously worried about me crying, was patting my back but her gaze didn't leave the swirling water.

"Art's parents..." I faintly heard her mumble.

Grandpa Virion clapped his hands together and stood up.

"Okay! Arthur! Let's let your parents know that you're alive!"

According to Grandpa Virion, strict regulations controlled communications between the Kingdom of Elenoir and Sapin. However, Rinia, being a diviner not discovered by the Kingdom of Sapin, allowed us a certain unregulated freedom in a sense.

"How this process will work is that I will pour some of my innate mana into you, establishing a temporary link. When I give you the signal, start speaking as if you're talking to your parents. It's important to know that they will hear your voice inside their heads so they may not believe what you're saying at first. Make sure to get them to believe that it really is you that's speaking to them and that they're not going crazy. Remember, we're just doing this to let them know you're still alive. I'm going to emit your voice directly into both your parents' minds. I can't keep the connection up for long so say what you need to within two minutes," she asserted, a serious gaze from her eyes.

Nodding at this, I prepare myself as well.

"Begin... NOW!"

Her whole body began glowing the same color as her eyes and I could see the same glow spreading onto me as well.

Taking a deep breath, I started talking.

Hi Mom, hi Dad. It's me, your son Arthur. You're probably really surprised that you're hearing my voice inside your head, huh? Well there's a reason for that. Before that though, I want you to know that I'm alive and safe. Again, I'm alive and well Mom, Dad. I managed to survive the fall off the cliff and I'm currently living in the Kingdom of Elenoir with the elves. Please don't tell anyone else this. I don't have much time so I'll only say the things most crucial. A friend of mine is a deviant like you mom, except she's a diviner so I was able to see how you guys are doing just now as well. She is also the one that is allowing you guys to be able to hear my voice. I want to go back to you guys as soon as possible but I can't right now. No, I'm safe and alive right now but I have a sort of er... illness inside my body that I need to get rid of before I am able to go back. Don't worry, as long as I stay here and have the elves treat me, I'm 100% okay. So please, don't worry. I don't know when I'll be able to talk to you guys like this again, but what's important is that I'm alive and I know you guys are as well. Dad, Mom, both

of you guys should be hearing my voice right now so confirm it with each other if you still can't believe this. Remember; don't tell anyone where I am right now. Better yet, just keep it as if I was still dead to make things simpler. It may take months or even years for me to be able to go back but just be sure that I WILL be going back home. I love you guys *sniff* so much and I miss you. Stay safe, and Dad, make sure to keep Mom and my baby sibling safe. Mom *sniff*, please make sure dad doesn't get into trouble. Your son, Art."

I had trouble keeping my eyes open from the tears that continuously poured down. I simply stood silent, rubbing my eyes as I did all I could from breaking down. The glow faded around both of us and Elder Rinia collapsed back into her chair, sweating and pale.

"Elder Rinia, I don't know how to thank you for this," I managed to croak out.

"Train well and continue to cherish those close to you, child. That's how you'll thank me. Also! Don't forget to drop in once in a while. This grandma here gets lonely kekeke~!" She answered with a weak smile.

I gave her a tight hug, making her almost jump, she eventually succumbed to my cuteness and hugged me in return before shooing all of us away.

While we were walking out, I noticed Tess pouting a little, looking at my chest.

By the time we had arrived back at the castle, it was already dark. A maid greeted us on arrival, but before I had the chance to go back into my room, I saw the king and queen.

The king came up to me first.

"Arthur, I know you overheard what we were saying earlier today and I apologize for that. Years of being a King has made me a bit old fashioned and I was unreasonably stubborn on you not belonging here."

The queen continued for her husband, holding my hands in hers.

"You are now Elder Virion's first disciple. This gives you more than enough reason for all of us to accept you. Even if that fact didn't exist, you still saved our daughter. Please consider this place your home. I know you miss your parents dearly but if I can be of any consolation, don't hesitate and treat me as you would your own mother," she said, giving me a sincere smile.

"Papa! Mama! ..." Tess says with her hands covering her mouth. She then ran up to them and hugged them both.

I smiled back, thanking them as well. They were good people. Good people that were simply looking out for their kingdom.

Smiling behind us, Grandpa Virion nodded at all of us in approval before exclaiming, "Brat! Training starts tomorrow so sleep early!"

I woke up from an immense pain covering my body. Cold sweat had already covered my body as the feeling of my body burning intensifies.

"AARGH!" I clutched my body tight, trying to endure when the door suddenly swings open and Grandpa Virion runs towards me.

"It's getting worse..."

He placed both hands on my sternum, where my mana core is located, before starting to emit his own mana into me.

Slowly, the pain subsided and I was left panting, my clothes drenched in sweat.

"T-thank you," I managed to wheeze out.

Without looking up, he replied, "It's a bit early, but let's start training now."

Looking out the window, I noticed that the sun had yet to even rise. I probably wasn't going to be able to fall asleep again so I nodded and followed him out into the courtyard.

Sitting cross-legged, he took a long look at me before explaining, "Until now, you've been purifying your mana core and manipulating your mana using your mana channels. While, for normal mages, this method is sufficient, for beast tamers, we can't rely on this approach. Instead, we do something called assimilation."

I sat down facing him. My face must've tipped him off that I had no idea what he was talking about.

"Haha! Don't worry, you'll know soon enough. What it essentially is, is integrating the mana from your core directly into your body's bones and

muscles, hence the method, assimilation. Unfortunately, throughout the period of assimilating, your mana core won't develop at all, but that isn't the point of this. Once the mana from your new core is absorbed throughout your body, you'll be able to start utilizing whatever power your beast's will had."

So this is what Sylvia meant! Throughout this whole journey through the Forest of Elshire and meeting the royal family and Grandpa Virion, I couldn't help but think that Sylvia had somehow planned all of this out.

"Slowly release the mana out of your core and don't be tempted to use your mana channels. Instead, let it seep out into your body and slowly have all of your muscles and bones absorb the mana. This will take time and effort, but throughout this process, your mana core should reject your body less and less," Virion instructed. "There isn't much I can help you with for the first part of your training except making sure your mana is distributed evenly throughout your body and relieving you when your body spasms like earlier."

Training continued on with me meditating, dispersing the mana out of my core and into my body. I had gotten the hang of it after a few days but I realized how long of a journey this would be. Directing my mana to form a core when I was an infant took a couple of years but this was doing the exact opposite except with more mana and an extra step further of assimilating the mana directly into the muscles and bones.

I didn't leave the castle during this time because I wouldn't know when my body would act up again. I was really grateful for Grandpa Virion for sticking by me throughout this time. Unfortunately for Tess, this left her very little time to play with me. The times I wasn't meditating, I was resting in my room, my body aching from being imbued with mana. However, that didn't stop her from simply barging and chattering on about her day.

After several weeks of assimilation, my body acted up less frequently and I was allowed to go out into the city. So after promising Tess that I'd go touring around the city of Zestier, I went to sleep.

Waiting outside my room was an adorably dressed Tess. She was wearing a white sleeveless sundress and a white sheer cardigan over it. The light pink colored sun hat she wore over her head was decorated with a pale flower, giving her a very fresh and doll-like appearance.

"Took you long enough! Hurry, let's hurry!" She grabbed my hand, half dragging me as I fought my aching body to keep up with her pace.

Seeing the city once again didn't distill the amazement I had when I had first arrived at Zestier. As we got off the carriage and start walking, we took time to visit the numerous stalls and stores that the city had to offer. While the two of us were met with a lot stares from the fact that a human child is holding hands with their kingdom's only princess, it was a feeling I was used to since my previous life so it didn't bother me. What bothered me, however, was that, while most of these gazes only held curiosity, some stares were filled with blatant hostility.

Coming out of the armor shop, I had just moved out of the way for someone when an elven child bumps my shoulder.

"Hmph! Well if it isn't the human brat that Elder Virion has taken under. I've heard all about you. Gross, I got human germs on my clothes," he snidely remarked, a look of disgust pasted on his face.

It is fairly obvious by the clothes of this child, who couldn't be much older than Tess, and the attendants, along with the group of friends following behind him, that he was a noble.

After spending so much time with Tess, I had almost forgotten how immature children were. I couldn't help but think that, whether they were an elf or a human, spoiled nobles always seemed to act as if they've been taught out of the same manual.

He then turned to face Tess, his facing transforming into a well-practiced smile as he offered her his hand. "Princess, it is below your level to be with this human brat. Allow me to escort you around." He urged, expecting Tess to receive his hand.

Not even looking in his direction, Tess linked her arm with mine and coldly retorted, "Art, let's go. There is a bug in that direction and I don't want to accidentally step on it with my new shoes."

As I was pulled away, I glanced back, shooting the noble kid a look of pity, which seemed to infuriate him even more.

"Hold it brat! I'm not done with you!" He shouted, running up to me and gripping my shoulder.

"I heard you're pretty talented for a human mage. Around here, I happen to be a pretty well known genius myself. My mana core has already reached red stage and aside from water manipulation, my mother said that I'll soon even be able to manipulate plants!"

I responded with my most sincere, yet blatantly sarcastic expression of surprise and worship. "Oh my word! Princess Tessia! It seems we are in the presence of pure genius here. I am not worthy!"

Tess let out a giggle, not even bothering to hide her amusement.

"I'll be sure to give you proper respect Lord Genius of the Elves. So if you'll excuse us..."

As I started leading Tess away, a handkerchief flew past us, landing on the ground.

Turning back, I see the noble brat's face, red as a tomato, glaring at me as the attendants and friends all let out quiet gasps.

"How dare you initiate a duel with the disciple of Elder Virion. You may be of noble blood, Feyrith, but you should still know your place! Take it back," Tessia ordered, her eyes narrowed in a glare.

"I'm sorry, Princess, but my father has taught me never to let my pride be stomped. Arthur, ready yourself for a duel or retreat with your tail between your legs knowing that your actions reflect your mentor as well. The choice is yours." Feyrith puffed his chest, withdrawing a wand from under his cape.

Some of the people nearby had overheard and had already started to gather around us. Tessia looked uncertain about all of this, but just nodded my head and took a few steps away from us.

I didn't want to cause a scene since I was a visitor, but after weeks of stifling meditation, my body was actually eager for the chance to fight.

"Princess, please do the honor of initiating the duel," the noble brat said as he began polishing his black wand with his sleeve.

I could see Tess rolling her eyes as she took another step back. "Let the duel commence."

While my mana core was still in the early stages of dark red, I could feel mana strengthening every fiber of muscle I flexed as I dashed towards Feyrith.

It was over in a second. He was too cocky and didn't even take the necessary precautions to find out whether I was an augments or conjurer and by the time I was in arm's length, he hadn't even begun his chant.

As my palm sank into his gut, all he managed to let out was a sharp breath of air being forced out of his lungs before flying back tumbling on the floor. I was glad that I had used my palm because as soon as my hand made contact, I felt a sturdy chainmail underneath his clothes.

Feyrith's attendants and friends eyes grew wide as Tessia quickly ran to me and pulled me away.

Later, Tessia explained to me that, in a duel, there were certain unsaid customs. One of these customs was to let the challenger make the first move. The other was that informal duels between nobles were only a demonstration of magic, not actual fighting. This got a good laugh out of Gramps when he found out, saying that the duels between nobles were utter foolishness and a completely inaccurate way to measure someone's magical prowess.

All in all, what Feyrith had meant when he initiated the duel was to simply take turns showing off each other's respective magic talent.

It was disappointing to realize that the look of shock from everyone around us wasn't from my fighting prowess, but from the fact that I ignored the customs of the duel.

Since then, I chose to stay in the manor most of the days keeping myself out of trouble, as I lived a rigorous lifestyle that followed consisted of

meditating with Grandpa Virion in the morning, spending a little time with Tessia in the afternoon and training by myself at night. During this time, I've sent messages to my parents every once in awhile to let them know I was still alive and that I miss them dearly.

Like this, three years had passed.