

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

My deepest apologies for the delay everyone! Summer period is always chaotic at work for me and I was also working on the anniversary special, to top it all off, this chapter contains a topic I never approached in my mind even just for fun, and so I was completely lost on how to transmute it into something enjoyable to read. I think I am finally satisfied tho.

That said not really much else to add! I just remind you that you have still time to join the Writing Competition till the 17th of July!

Chapter 83: The Red Horizon

Tia and Tina trailed in the darkness behind their newly appointed master. The two blondes had been silent for the whole trip and communicated only through glances. They had rarely served as bodyguards before, their skills were far more inclined toward harming rather than protecting.

Not that the one before them needed any protection to begin with. Tia had known monsters during her life, her mother came immediately to her mind as an example, but none of them managed to elicit such a visceral reaction from them with their presence alone.

This one was different though, a monster among monsters, a walking calamity who hardly cared for those in his paths to begin with. She had never seen someone despair so much over a spilled soup when the moment before his life was being threatened. The situation sounded like something she could find in a comedical book, but since both her and Tine were there to suffer the consequences, she could hardly find the comedic side to this.

Normally, they would be using this time to study their opponent and find an opening to strike, they were raised to be masters of deception and treachery after all, but the simple truth was that when the gap was so great, there was no strategy that could hold.

The monster before them never seemed to have his guard up, and yet Tia could confidently bet her limbs and eyes that if she tried anything she would be immediately disposed off. The monster did not even sleep, but even if he did, she was quite sure the result wouldn't change.

She had never come across anyone like this in her entire, even if short, life. She was used to meeting powerful individuals, most of which she could not hope to beat in a fair one on one, but that never stopped her and her sisters from carrying out the mission, even in the few cases when they failed, they would reorganize and scheme again and again till they accomplished their task.

But that felt impossible right now, as if the mere concept of taking out someone like that was simply unconceivable for their sharp minds.

With faced with that... what could they do apart from giving up?

In hindsight it was now clear to them that they did the right thing, the only thing that would ensure their survival. They did not jest when they called their new master a monster.

Tia had known many so-called monsters in her life, but she personally thought that none of them lived up to the title. Usually, they were just extremely cruel or sadistic men and women. But if cruelty, sadism, and violence were all it took to make a monster, then the world had enough monsters to be considered a race of their own.

No, she realized that those were no monsters at all when she finally witnessed a true monster at work.

Someone who lived their life following their own goals regardless of the world, that was a true monster.

During their voyage to this place the monster had only one goal, reaching the intended location. That was standard, anyone would have that on their mind. But then the world would intervene, sending hurtles in their way, obstacles, bandits, demi-humans. Any of that would have anyone stop and contemplate their next move or at least make them change focus from their initial goal to the hurdle the world sent toward them.

But a monster, a true monster, was someone who simply dismissed the world and bent it to their own whims.

Tia had seen it with her own eyes. A landslide blocking the road? The monster did not even slow his advance, the large stones simply moved apart in front of him as if they never were there. Bandits ambushing them? the monster continued his stroll at the same pace as if they didn't exist, and anyone who dared to step in his way was simply obliterated leaving nothing behind, even

when the rest run, he did not give chase, as if he didn't even realize what just happened. The same went for demi-humans, those who could even tower above him and had enough muscle in one hand to crush a human with. And yet they all disappeared in thin air as soon as they dared to get in the way of the monster and his unrelenting advance.

In all of this, no sound came from the monster, he simply carried on, advancing toward his goal regardless of the world around him, a silent march of something that didn't seem to belong to this world and took terrible form and purpose under those robes and mask.

An antithesis to the concept of existence itself.

He did not rejoice in his victories, he did not cry in frustration at his obstacles, he did not pause to contemplate the world around him, he did not enjoy the slaughter, he did not ponder his choices.

He simply existed, defying the concept at the same time, an anomaly that should have never laid a foot on this world. And that was exactly what made him a monster

Tia had never been courageous nor just nor fair in her life. So to her all this realization brought was only relief that she chose to serve in a rare moment in which the monster before them acknowledged something outside of his current objective. For now she knew that if luck hadn't been on her side that day, she would just be another of the nameless existences that had the misfortune of stepping in front of a true monster.

She was sure her sisters felt the same by now, Tina certainly did, and Tira was already smitten even though she was currently carrying out her own mission right now.

She wondered why the monster had them coming along, certainly not for protection, he clearly had no fear nor care of what the world could throw at him.

He certainly did not doubt their loyalty, did he? Tia would certainly fight her entire guild rather than only risk having to face that monster face to face ever again.

And they already showed their loyalty, didn't they? She and Tina massacred those foolish Holy Kingdom assassins, didn't they? They even had to skin that one, for her sister to use her Talent.

Well, the monster had been displeased when he discovered the three of them caused a fire as a distraction, but Tira was punished for it, didn't that make it a fair exchange? Though, her eldest sister enjoyed the punishment, but that was hardly their fault and more the fault of her sick perversions... Well, now that she thought about it, maybe the monster was not pleased exactly for that, since by enjoying it, Tira had kind of invalidated the punishment.

Tia was so lost into her own thoughts that she didn't even realize that the one in front of her stopped and crashed right in his robes. In her defense, it was the dead of night, there was no light source, and the dark robes were practically invisible, but she doubted any of that would save her from the consequences of her mistake.

The monster slowly turned, the blue gems encased in his mask shining eerily even though there was no light to reflect on them. Tia felt her stomach go on a free fall as the monster's gloved hand slowly reached towards her.

She had dared to step into the path of a true monster, and she knew what the consequences of that were. She instinctively shut her eyes, not wishing to see what would happen next.

Tia felt something grasp her shoulder. She waited for pain, a pain that never came, prompting her to slowly and hesitantly open her coral-colored eyes.

“Is everything alright?”

Tia took a while to make sense of the words she had just received, as if the one towering over her had just spoken gibberish she could not make sense of.

Once she regained control over her body, all she could do was nod toward the monster in front of her.

“You look quite pale... I guess teens should not normally be up this late... umu... we are almost done here, then you can rest... till then, maybe some sugar could help.”

The monster mumbled to no one, how he could comment on her complexion in pitch darkness was a mystery she would not investigate. He retracted his hand from her shoulder and rummaged under his robes.

“Here, this should help.”

He handed her something she hesitantly reached for, still not believing she got away scott free from her previous predicament.

She grabbed a stick and brought it closer to check what it was while the monster handed something else, or more probably the same thing, to her sister.

She squinted her eyes to try and see what she was holding even though that judging from the fruity smell, it was food.

Tia could barely see the form of what seemed to be small balls impaled on the stick she was holding. Not wanting to upset the

monster, and knowing that he had no need for poison if he wanted them gone, she took a tentative bite.

Her coral eyes shot wide as a fresh, sweet, and fruity taste assaulted her mouth.

Even though she had been taught her whole life to remain emotionless and stoic, she could not help but release a small moan of appreciation for the unexpected treat. And judging by the sounds coming from next to her, her sister was in agreement with her opinion.

Tia had no idea where the monster was hiding this, or how was it possible for this food to be so fresh considering they had not stop in a city for weeks, not that she knew any city where they sold this kind of food.

She eagerly continued to devour her treat nonetheless, she doubted she would be able to resist the tentation even if she tried to after taking the first bite.

She only paused when the magic caster created a ball of light in his hand and shot it through the sky without a word or incantation. The light soon resembled a shooting star as it sped through the dark night sky and disappeared over the horizon.

The assassin resumed eating the sweet treat provided soon after the light had completely disappeared, and far too soon she had licked the stick clean much to her disappointment.

If it was anyone else, she might have even tried to ask for more, but seeing how the one before them was the scariest person she knew, she refrained from trying that. Though, was she just mistaken about him?

Was he truly the monster she envisioned in her mind?

A freezing cold sensation crawled up her spine as she thought back at all she witnessed during this trip, and yet the sweet and fruity sensation still lingering in her mind was a comfort she also could not ignore.

She might have to add the title of most baffling person she knew to him now.

Maybe she could find some clarity by talking to him? But then again, was it a risk worth taking?

It took some time to make up her mind and calm her nerves enough for her to decide on the matter, but as soon as she took a step forward, she immediately was interrupted by the appearance of a new presence.

“Marquis Satoru, I presume?”

The voice was calm and collected, even warm and friendly she could say, certainly youthful... but something felt wrong even though Tia could not point out what exactly.

A light appeared out of nowhere illuminating the area and revealing the new arrival. A young man in his late teens or early twenties stood there, his perfect visage without any blemish stood out as if it was a sculpture of some famous artist, his black hair cascading down his back. If Tia wasn't as familiar as she was with human bodies, she might have confused him for a girl. But the most eye-catching feature of his were certainly his sharp red eyes filled with a coldness that did not match his otherwise almost angelic appearance.

“You find me at a disadvantage good sir.”

The monster robed in black rebutted courteously, eliciting a small smile from the pale man.

“You may refer to me as the First Seat.”

He introduced himself without curtly.

“Very well then, First Seat, I have encountered demi-humans on my way here, is there any problem on your part I should be aware of?”

The marquis questioned without giving away any emotion.

“No, it is proceeding rather well, unfortunately these demi-humans are as rabid and chaotic as animals, and sometimes we find ourselves faced with stubborn fools who would rather fight to their death than flee... but what can you expect from uncivilized beasts?”

The affable man explained in a calm and relaxed tone as if he was discussing the weather.

“Umu, we must keep to schedule, we have a maximum of a week still... if you aren’t done by then... I would find myself forced to intervene.”

As soon as the monster said that the serene expression disappeared from the young man’s face, replaced by an hard and stoic look.

“Do not worry magic caster, me and mine will keep our word, the Slane Theocracy never leaves business unfinished.”

As he said that figures began to emerge from the darkness around them, though, they did not step close enough to be illuminated by the lone light, just enough so both Tia and Tina could sense them and see small movements in the darkness, which could easily be mistaken for a trick of the eye by an untrained individual.

“Good, I did not expect anything else from the esteemed Theocracy... speaking of which... that armor...”

As the masked caster mentioned the piece of armor, Tia immediately noticed how the young man’s grip around his spear tightened.

“The Theocracy’s reliques are not for sale, merchant.”

The tone was dead serious as if the black-haired man was trying to challenge the black robed monster in front of him to say anything else

“Umu, a shame, but you can’t blame a man for trying to acquire such a marvelous piece now, can you?”

The robed caster backed down making the young man relax and smile again.

“I guess merchants have good eyes for quality, I can hardly blame you for that.”

The black robed man turned as if to leave the scene before stopping abruptly and giving a small bow of his head toward the darkness.

“It’s a pleasure meeting you again miss.”

He said to seemingly no one, or Tia would have thought so if it wasn’t for the fact that whoever he was referring to squeaked femininely from the darkness.

“Oh, First Seat, one last thing.”

The marquis said turning back toward the young man.

“Please give my regards to that mischievous woman and tell her I enjoyed the read, after all, even though she is among the most

annoying people I know, it would be quite uncouth to not recognize her skill and thank her for her gift.”

For the first time since the conversation started, the black haired man seemed to be genuinely taken aback, if not shocked by the robed monster’s words. But before Tia could analyze anything more, she found herself moving away, following in the wake of the monster disappearing into the darkness of night once again.

{Fresh Water Sea}

{Karliha’s P.O.V.}

A thick fog clung to the sea, its cool tendrils wrapping around the hulls of her ships, added to the moonless sky, it reduced visibility to mere meters. The only light that allowed them to see something in those few meters came from the flickering magic lanterns atop the masts, casting a dim, ghostly glow across the water. The soft bluish light barely piercing the gloom, and the distant roar of the ocean was muffled by the eerie stillness.

A gust of wind snapped the sails of the lead vessel, carrying the faint scent of salt and tension from an earlier standoff they had with the opposing fleet. Above, the stars were obscured by the clouds, but the crew moved with practiced precision, guided by the dim light and memory alone. Every creak of the wood was amplified in the silence, every ripple of the water a potential threat.

Karliha, as a veteran, had known combat on the sea, pirates were few, but those who survived their first years in the wild sea came to be some of the most dangerous foes her kingdom had to deal with, second only to the accursed demi-humans.

She had almost two decades of experience on the sea, but she had never witnessed a night like this one. And it wasn't certainly for the poor weather, no, she had witnessed storms that could make this sea look like a fancy bathtub in comparison. What truly made this night unique was the lack of sound, and it wasn't like anyone was really sleeping, not with the enemy so close.

Karliha had seen her sailors play around, tease each other, or even curse so vulgarly that they would have made a prostitute blush. Yet, she never saw them do their job without a sound, as if they were already dead, and just ghosts haunting a ship.

She had to give them their due, she wasn't talkative either. She may have been elevated to admiral of the Royal Fleet at a slightly younger age than was expected, but she had no experience in any kind of grand scale conflict and didn't know what to expect either.

The most she did was give chase to small groups of pirate ships and outsmarting them, she had never found herself facing such numbers and organization before.

Not that Re-Estize was known for their naval force either. On an approximate calculation they didn't even have enough ships to bring half of their foot soldiers with them. They might have reached that result by confiscating all merchant vessels, but that would be foolish as they would isolate most of their merchant. Not that she doubted the Re-Estize king was mad enough to attempt that, rumors said that he after he lost his daughter, he had completely gone mad, ordering the slaughter of thousands of innocent priests in the most brutal ways imaginable. His lapdog monster was only happy to oblige.

Or so the rumors said at least, she did not raise to a high enough position to not know that half of a war was manipulating public

opinion. After all, convince the people you are fighting a madman you can't reason with, and they will fight to the death. Have people believe the one they are fighting for would throw them away like pawns because he was mad, and they would defect at the first chance they got.

She herself adopted this tactic many a time, she may be the admiral, but to many of the sailors in the royal fleet she was just one of them. Someone who could order them around certainly, but still one of them. That was why they would follow her to hell and back if she asked to.

And apparently the occasion to test that was right here in front of her.

She noticed their lookout descend from the mast to give his report.

“Leo, tell me you have something good to report.”

She said to the approaching old man who still had the agility of one in his twenties.

“It's as good as it can be captain, the enemy fleet is still there, their lights are still on, as you said, attacking with this weather would be like asking for trouble, this poor Re-Estize sods can't even see the difference between a oar and their own-“

The old man was interrupted by screams coming from the ship in front of them, the longships serving as their first line of defense for the admiral ship the Holy Crown. She noticed smoke coming from the front of the longship in question.

“Did those moron paladins try to cook something again and started a fire?”

Leo questioned but Karliha had a far more ominous feeling creeping up on her. She had always been a woman of reason, that was exactly why she valued instinct above most things but would not let it control her life.

“This isn’t right, tell the first line to close ranks and stand on guard-“

She couldn’t finish her order that a new wave of screams reached them, the fires were multiplying on numerous ships. And then something unconceivable happened, not because it was physically impossible, but because it made no sense.

After all, how was it possible for multiple enemy ships to just ram on their longboats if the enemy was supposed to be a few miles away still?

At once, the air came alive with the sounds of combat, metal clashing as hordes of soldiers jumped from enemy ships on her own longships much to the panic of soldiers and sailors alike. It didn’t take much for the cries of warriors blending into a symphony of chaos to begin as the enemy pressed their advantage and slaughtered everyone in their wake.

Karliha turned toward Leo to question how this had been even possible with their lookout’s eyes constantly on the enemy. but the old man was already halfway up the mast with his spyglass glued to his right eye. He soon jumped down, landing without trouble as he hurriedly made his way over to her.

“Captain! A trap! The lights are still on but are disappearing one by one, they must have left half their fleet there to play decoy!”

The man shouted out as she swore under her breath, never expecting such a shrewd tactic from the still green Re-Estize fleet.

And just when she thought things couldn't get any worse, a sudden crack of lightning split the night, setting multiple of the sails of the ships attacked on fire and blocking any retreat she could have tried to enact.

She gritted her teeth as she looked on fire engulfing everything before her, metal, wood, and men alike, as she stood there powerless to save those she had spent most of her life with.

Karliha swore they would all pay for this. Keeping her rising rage at bay she turned toward her men. The enemy might have made a masterful opening move, but they missed a point. The Holy Kingdom's fleet was composed of fifty vessels, among them there were twenty-five longboats, seven cargo ships, fifteen armored battleships, and three galleons, the Paladin, the Priestess, and the Holy Crown.

On the other hand, Re-Estize had barely twenty to twenty-five ships from what they had seen, and barely half of those were made for battle, and no galleons were among them. All in all, it should have been a guaranteed win, and now to play their little game they just divided their forces, if they wanted reinforcements they would have to wait for a while, which was exactly what Karliha should exploit.

If she managed to destroy this part of their fleet, the remaining half or so would be easily surrounded and destroyed, they couldn't play the same trick twice after all.

But to do that she would have to pass over her burning longships to do that before it was too late and the enemy had time to regroup, which would cause even more victims.

So it was with a heavy heart that she gave her orders.

“Sink the burning longships! Order all the battleships around the Holy Crown to advance and make those fuckers pay!”

Her men hesitated only a moment before moving to the various ballistae placed all around the galleon and began shooting at the hulls of their own burning ships, causing them to rapidly sink. She looked on, mentally saluting her companions, as she watched the ships sink agonizing minute after agonizing minute. She would have time to mourn her compatriots later, now it was time for revenge!

She saw her swift battleships advance through the floating wooden debris. The first one to reach one of Re-Estize’s ships maneuvered perfectly to pierce its side with the front and basically splitting it in two.

She smiled as she heard the cheers of her men at the fortunate, but still welcomed, ramming.

The battle became fiercer when Re-Estize’s ships managed to cover their flanks and arrows started to fly.

She saw the first wave of Angel Guardians being summoned alongside some Archangel Flame, flying troops were a boon in such a battle where the fighting space was fairly limited to the decks of the ships. The result made the constant whining of the priests almost worth it.

Their wave of angels assaulted one of the ships making quick work of the soldiers on top. That was until spells began to fly from the Re-Estize’s side.

Karliha doubted anyone ever saw such a barrage of spells in recent history. Fire, ice, lightning, and probably countless

unidentifiable types of spells flew everywhere, decimating their angels and even dealing heavy damage to some of her battleships.

The darkness was split in countless pieces by the raging color of spells and glow of angels as the battle ensued.

She gritted her teeth once more. They were still winning the exchange, but their momentum had been completely halted, if she had to guess, the enemy hoped to delay them enough to regroup with the rest of their fleet which was certainly approaching while they were here throwing everything they had at each other.

If she wanted to change the pace of the battle, she herself would have to join in, the Holy Crown was a powerful weapon in itself, but it was also their flagship, risking it could cause massive damage to morale, but she had little time to ponder this.

“Full speed! Advance! Shoot those bastards down and ram them through!”

She ordered as the galleon began to advance splitting apart any debris in its wake.

She shouted orders right and left, making sure they would deal a crippling blow to their enemies. Even if the fools tried to blow the galleons hull with fire spells it would not work, the Holy Crown was the flagship for a reason. It was created to be the ultimate weapon on the sea, reinforced with magic-resistant spells and materials. It could probably defeat half of the Holy Fleet alone if not for the boarding that would inevitably occur against those numbers.

She felt like smirking in satisfaction when most of the spells launched by the enemy toward them simply left little to no damage to the hull.

The Holy Crown slammed into one of the remaining ships of Re-Estize, completely obliterating it without suffering any damage. She let the men cheer as they either rammed or shot down more and more of the enemy ships.

Even though they were losing some of their own, it was a necessary sacrifice.

When all the enemy ships were sunk she only had one last thing to do. Reorganize their position and wait for the remaining enemy, if they dared to show up at all after witnessing the power of the Holy Crown.

They might both have lost around a dozen ships but her fleet was still mostly here and with high morale after their overwhelming assault.

This battle costed her much already, but the light at the end of the tunnel was in sight right now.

She moved around to give the order when suddenly something dropped from the sky on her deck.

It took everyone present a few seconds to understand what just happened, but by the end of it an unknown armored man stood now on her deck. They stared each other down, but before anyone could make a move more men dropped from the sky, prompting her to look up and notice a myriad of Floating Boards descending open her vessel.

**“WARRIOR TROOP! FOLLOW ME! FOR THE KINGDOM!
FOR THE KING!”**

The armored man bellowed as he unsheathed a glowing bluish blade and immediately dashed toward the nearest paladin at a

speed she could not follow and bisected him in tow with a single slash.

“FOR THE WARRIOR CAPTAIN! FOR THE KINGDOM! FOR THE KING!”

The now revealed Warrior Troop bellowed as they stormed the deck slaughtering her outnumbered men left and right.

“Captain! We must escape! That’s the Warrior Captain! The strongest man in Re-Estize!”

Leo cried out as he grabbed her and made a run for it.

She was still dazed and disoriented by how the situation had shifted in less than a few dozens of seconds. They were winning a minute ago, destroyed half of the Re-Estize’s fleet, and were on their way to finish the rest of, and now she found herself being dragged away, abandoning the greatest ship the world had ever seen while her men, armed or not were massacred like cattle in a farm.

“A PLANK! A PLANK FOR THE CAPTAIN! RETREAT! RETREAT!”

She heard the old man shout to the nearest ship as hell was being unleashed upon the top deck of the Holy Crown.

“DON’T LET HER ESCAPE!”

She heard someone else shout as she still felt like what she was currently experiencing could be nothing more than an hallucination, yes, she might have just hit her head and be dreaming right now.

She felt the arms of the old man wrap around her as she was being thrown on a plank that made her slide till one of the battleship where she was received by other of her men.

She looked back up at Leo, the old man by now had a few blade sticking from his body, the last she saw of him before he dropped out of her vision was him pushing the plank away from the galleon's deck and into the sea.

All she could think about were his words, the words she could still hear echoing in her head.

“Retreat...”

She mumbled much to the confusion of the men around her.

“RETREAT!”

As the shout left her lips she felt something inside her snap in place once again as the torpor she had experienced till that moment cleared from her mind and she found herself in control once more.

“RETREAT TO THE PRIESTESS AND THE PALADIN” USE EVERY REMAINING SHIP TO SET A DEFENSIVE PERIMETER! AND FOR THE LOVE OF THE FOUR GODS! LOOK UP!”

Everyone immediately moved to obey her orders as her eyes returned to the abandoned galleon were the battle was still in full swing, even though she already knew the result.

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How could she have ever anticipated this? How was she supposed to know Re-Estize would deploy their strongest asset in this battle? Warriors had no place on a battle on the sea... that was all she had known her entire life... the Warrior Captain Gazef Stronoff alone was said to be worth a thousand men, and yet those numbers meant nothing if they could sink the ship he was on. He would have drowned like any other man.

Instead... he managed to land on her flagship... and once he was there the mere realization of what it meant sent her into shock.

If it wasn't for old man Leo, she would be either a prisoner or dead by now.

As her fleet retreated to the backlines she could not stop staring at the ship she was leaving behind, her home for the last ten years.

She had lost everything in the last hour.

Her men, her ships, her home.

An unfamiliar hatred made its way into her heart and filled the void left by all she had loved and lost.

By the end of this... she would have every last of Re-Estize's ships sunk, alongside their soldiers... Every. Last. One.

By the time her orders were completed she had already boarded the Priestess, flanked with the Paladin, the two sister-ships were surrounded on all flanks by the remaining eleven battleships, and another dozen longships. All other ships had been sunk or were not accounted for, probably lost into the darkness of night, hopefully not in their enemies' hands.

With this formation, Karliha will have her last stand, with half of her fleet she would crush the remaining dozen or so ships Re-Estize had left.

And even if the damned dogs tried using the Holy Crown against them, they would board and reclaim the ship by any means necessary.

The fog had dissipated by now, and a red hue was emerging from the horizon announcing the break of dawn and the end of the bloodiest night she had ever witnessed.

A part of her tried to ignore questioned if the red water was the result of the dawning sun or the blood spilled that night.

She shook her head, pushing back such grim and unnecessary thoughts, even more now that she needed her full mental capacities to end this and avenge all she had lost.

“Ma’am, everyone is in position.”

She felt a freezing cold shudder crawl up her spine at the words of the man behind her.

“...Good...”

With a swift movement of her hand, she unsheathed her blade and buried it deep inside the man’s guts.

The mortally wounded man stumbled back toward the edge of the ships as her sailors and soldiers surrounded him after witnessing the scene.

“S-stay back...”

The man choked out as he revealed a piece of paper, pointing it threateningly at all the men around him, as if it was a legendary blade.

Karliha took only a few second to realize what the paper was, a magic scroll with an unknown spell sealed in. she gestured her men to stand back.

“G-good... how did y-you know...”

The man still bleeding out at a rapid rate, asked. If she could keep him talking he might just bleed out and die before anyone else had to lose their life.

“No fool calls a captain ma’am on her ship, certainly no man of mine.”

Much to her surprise, the bleeding man chuckled at her words.

“Only for that you would stab someone through their guts? What? Is that time of the month or something?”

She chose to ignore the disgusting comment of the dying man and just limited herself to glare at him with disgust.

Silence descended on the deck as only the trembling breaths of the man could be heard before he slumped back against the bulwark.

Still, she didn’t dare to approach seeing how he was still holding that unknown scroll that could still do unknown damage, or even start a fire on one of the only two galleons they had.

“Fuck, it hurts... I would have liked to enjoy those 100 gold coins with my wife and sons... eheheh... guess they will receive 300 now that I am fucked... Luka and Laigh will have a blast without their dad...”

She couldn’t care less about his ramblings, to her, every last man under her that had died had a wife and children waiting for them at home, a wife and children they will never see again. So, she

really lacked the empathy to feel anything but disgust toward the dying rat in front of her.

“Hey, captain...”

As the bleeding man said that his eyes fixed on hers.

“I gotta a message for you, before I kick the bucket...”

The man said as the grey paper glowed blue into his hands before he unexpectedly threw it overboard and into the sea.

The now unarmed man coughed up blood as he smiled creepily at her.

“Lord Satoru... sends his regards...”

Before she could even start to understand what his last words were about, everything shook as if a earthquake was happening right under them, even though that was impossible seeing how they were not on land.

Karliha fell on her side when the whole ship began to turn. Screams from everywhere was all she could hear as she witnessed men and objects alike flow overboard the more the galleon turned, seemingly being pushed upside down by an impossible force.

She barely managed to grab the bulwark to keep herself on the ship and not fall.

Karliha looked down to understand what the hell was causing this.

Her jaw unhinged and her eyes almost bulged out at the unreal vision she was witnessing.

The sea was seemingly opening up in a giant hole, as if it was a living creature preparing to take a bite, by looking down she could

only see the untold depths that had just been revealed by whatever this phenomenon was.

She looked in despair for what seemed to be hours as ship after ship was dragged down that bottomless hellhole that just opened up under them.

With a final crack, the Priestess split in two and toppled over, pushing her under the water.

The last thing she saw was an ethereal blue, like two glowing eyes staring at her in cold and ruthless indifference.

Then she knew no more.

A.N.

Man, this was so tough to write! I mean, I never even thought about a naval fight before, let alone how to write it!

I hope I didn't do too badly, please be gentle with the criticisms, it was my first time.

Jokes aside, the war is now in full swing! And we got the first major conflict! Poor guys thought they were playing battlefleet (does anyone play this board game nowadays?) and instead found themselves against someone playing on a campaign of Total War Warhammer. (And no, that scroll was no average scroll at all...)

That said, I am really curious to know what you think, seeing how we got some intrigue in the first part of the chapter and action in the second.

Make sure to leave a comment / review!

Till next time! Stay safe!