

(Every character depicted in the story below is a consenting legal adult over the age of 18)

A/N: Sevvi's thoughts as Camilla squares off against her nemesis from her days as a squire~

-x-X-x-

Sevvi smirks slightly as Camilla faces off against the male knight. Nobody is paying her much mind aside from treating her as a curiosity anyways, so she has no reason to hide her amused reaction.

The Dark Elf greatly approves of how her Master approached this situation. The way he'd fought the other man, this 'Sir Alonses' had been a master class in hiding his true strength. Anyone of any *real* skill would have seen that Thomas was just toying with Alonses of course... but so far from what Sevvi had seen, there weren't that many humans with real skill around.

It's obvious from the cocky grin on Alonses' face that he had barely even registered his complete and utter defeat at Lord Thomas' hands. The man might even be deluded enough to convince himself he'd *won* their bout, with Thomas 'retreating' before Alonses could really bring the pain... or something.

Whatever he thinks of his very short, very one-sided spar with Thomas, it's incredibly obvious he thinks absolutely nothing of this spar he's about to have with Camilla. As the two knights stand apart, readying themselves, Sevvi's smirk becomes a full grown grin at his overconfidence.

After all, she knows that Camilla is going to wipe the floor with this man. There's not a single doubt in her mind on that front. Sure, the red head might be the weakest of them... but that's just it. She's the weakest *of them*.

She's not weak compared to this waste of space standing across from her and the idea that she might lose never even crosses Sevvi's mind.

... Which is why it's more than a little confusing when they finally move to cross blades and Camilla acts so... *hesitantly*. The very first swing from Alonnes is filled with so many openings that Sevvī could have killed the human man a dozen times over. And while Camilla probably couldn't boast the same, she's still confident that the female knight would have been able to easily end the spar right then and there if she'd only committed.

Instead, Camilla continues to hesitate, blocking and deflecting Alonnes' sword but not actually following up. Instead, she maintains an entirely defensive stance, letting him come at her and probe her with repeated strikes that she manages to turn away time and time again, but never going on the offensive.

Furrowing her brow in consternation, Sevvī grunts.

"... What is she doing? Is she trying to tire him out or something to prove the true gulf of strength and skill between them?"

Eloise and Lord Thomas both look at Sevvī at that, Eloise blinking while Thomas just chuckles softly and shakes his head.

"I don't think so. I think it's far more likely Camilla simply doesn't have the self-confidence to end this fight early. She doesn't believe she's capable of beating him."

Sevvī's mouth opens... and then closes. She doesn't act like a slack jawed idiot or anything like that, but she is stunned by Lord Thomas' assessment. Staring at the two dueling knights incredulously now, she wrinkles her nose.

"Is she stupid? She's so far beyond him it's not even funny. Why wouldn't she be capable of beating him?"

Before Thomas can respond, Eloise pipes up instead.

"Sevvī... I think that's the first time I've ever heard you compliment Dame Camilla in all the time you've been with us."

Huh? Sevvii shoots the human woman a confused look even as Camilla and Alonses continue sparring in front of them.

“What are you talking about? I’m not complimenting her, I’m simply stating the facts, just as I always do. She might be weaker than Lord Thomas and I, and therefore a waste of our lord’s limited attention and effort... but that doesn’t change the fact that she’s head and shoulders above this man she’s currently fighting.”

Lord Thomas sighs for some reason. Meanwhile, Eloise gives Sevvii a long, considering look for a moment before tilting her head to the side.

“... Do you think, perhaps, that Dame Camilla can’t imagine defeating Sir Alonses because of all your comments? Because you consistently label her as a waste of resources, worthless, and weak?”

Sevvii furrows her brow again, more confused than ever before.

“... No?”

Eloise slowly nods, seeming to take this in.

“I see. You still don’t understand humans very well, do you? It’s funny, after all that time where you felt like this mysterious entity who was completely put together and knew everything that was going on... I’m still coming to terms with the fact that you were just as in over your head as the rest of us the entire time. And that you still are.”

H-Hey... that was... before Sevvii can muster up a response, there’s a sudden loud shout from the battle taking place in front of them.

“ENOUGH! Quit playing games, Camilla! Stop running away and fight me!”

Sevvii turns her full attention back to the field, her eyes narrowing as she assesses how the battle has developed while she was distracted. Put simply... it was just more of the same. Alonses had fought purely on the offensive while

Camilla had remained purely on the defensive, clearly too worried about overextending to make a single offensive move.

However... the male knight's words are a spurious insult to Camilla's skill as far as Sevi can see. The red head has barely moved from her starting point. Sure, she's shifted her footwork as needed and taken a few steps back here and there as Alonses tried desperately to strike her down, but she certainly hasn't been running away.

Judging by the frown on Camilla's face, she doesn't take too kindly to Alonses' accusation either. The red head scowls and sets her stance, a fiery glint in her eyes taking over the trepidation that had been there before as she grunts.

"... Very well."

There's a certain resignation to Camilla's stance, even as Alonses lets out a roar and charges forward again. This time, Camilla doesn't go for a defensive move... she goes for a strike of her own. But it's obvious she doesn't expect it to work. It's obvious her heart isn't in it.

Which makes it all the funnier in Sevi's eyes when she still manages to effortlessly slip past her male counterpart's guard and take him down with one single strike that sends him to his knees and ends with Camilla's blade at his neck.

It happens so quickly that Sevi is pretty sure most of their audience blinks and misses it. She and Thomas definitely see it, but Eloise's gasp of surprise makes it clear that the brunette doesn't quite follow.

Alonses himself takes a second to register what happened... and when he does, his eyes widen as he stares down at the blade resting against his neck, his body having frozen up even as his mind played catch up. There's a lengthy pause as Camilla stands there over him, seeming just as surprised. Then, she quickly pulls her blade back and offers him her hand while coughing to the side.

"A-Ahem... I suppose that's my win then, Alonses."

Sevvi watches carefully, half-expecting the male knight to try something underhanded in the face of his defeat. He'd given her the impression in the two short encounters she'd had with him so far that he wasn't very good at losing.

But while it's obvious he's very, very unhappy with how things happened... he nevertheless takes Camilla by the hand and lets her pull him to his feet. And then... he slowly nods.

"I suppose it is. Congratulations, Camilla. Your first ever victory."

Ah, and there it is. Sevvi rolls her eyes at his words, huffing as she mutters under her breath.

"None of her previous defeats mean anything you ignorant buffoon. You will never be able to defeat her ever again, not so long as our Lord continues to waste time on her training..."

Eloise is the only one who hears her, giving her another strange look that Sevvi ignores. Thomas, meanwhile, is stepping forward, a smile on his face.

"Well fought, you two! And Camilla... you acquitted yourself quite well!"

Camilla flushes a shade of red almost as dark as her hair, even as she quickly bows her head.

"Thank you my lord."

Hmph... Sevvi doesn't like that the female knight is the one getting praise. But at the same time she's forced to acknowledge that just this one, Camilla has... perhaps... *earned* it.

Alonses, meanwhile, still has a hilariously sour expression on his face, even as his eyes dart between their Lord and Camilla as though there's something he can't quite understand. Probably the fact that Camilla is still sticking with Lord

Thomas, even after the destruction of his family and the obvious enemies arrayed against them.

But Sevi knows why Camilla has not abandoned their Master. It's quite simple really... the red head is intelligent enough to recognize when she's on the *winning side*.

A burned down estate? A few dead family members? Another Noble House trying to disappear you from your accommodations in the middle of the night? It was all just so... *pedestrian*. The humans in this city were playing games that the Dark Elves had mastered centuries ago.

It was honestly a little cute... but also it was very obvious that this Lord Godman who had it in for Thomas... his days were very much numbered. Frankly, Sevi wished that Thomas would just unleash her on the problem already. Give her leave for a night and she would have all of his enemies dead by morning.

But alas... that wasn't her place to suggest such things. She was a servant first and foremost... Lord Thomas' elven maid. If he wished to make use of her other skills... that would be up to him.

"... I suppose your time in Last Hope was more productive than I thought, Dame Camilla."

Alonses finally breaks the awkward silence following Camilla and Thomas' last exchange. He doesn't look happy to admit her superiority over him, even as Thomas smiles cheerily.

"Indeed it was! Camilla here saved the town from certain death at least once, fighting off a Dire Wolf the size of a small house! It was incredible to see her fight and grow, really."

Ah, and now Camilla's face is as red as her hair color. She looks embarrassed as she shuffles nervously.

"Lord Thomas..."

As well she should! He was definitely interpreting events more favorably for her. Sevvi would have said something... but the look on Alonses' face made it clear what the purpose of Thomas' creative reinterpretation was. So she holds her tongue and watches through lidded eyes as the male knight's humiliation is completed.

"I see... well. It was a good spar... I suppose we'll have to get together and do another one sometime soon, if you're staying in the city for a bit."

Camilla rolls her shoulders for a moment before shrugging.

"I do not know what the future will hold. That is for my lord to decide. I am his loyal sword, from this day until my last."

Again, Alonses doesn't look happy to hear that. Though he does look to Thomas, clearly fishing for information. Sevvi isn't surprised when her Master just smiles blandly back.

"Truthfully, I don't know what the future will hold either. But I'm sure Camilla will be happy to teach you a thing or two any time you like, so long as we remain in the Capital."

Hah! The way that the male knight stiffens at Thomas' words makes Sevvi even more amused than before! However... Alonses never gets the chance to respond. Before he can, there's a commotion in the distance that draws all of their attention.

Sevvi immediately straightens up, her eyes narrowing as she sees men in shining, stylized armor stomping through the large training yard, making their way past everyone else without a single break in their stride or a hitch in their steps.

They head right for their group too and Sevvi tenses, her hands ready to flick under her skirts for the knives hidden there... if it proves necessary.

The one at the head of the procession stops just a few feet from her Master, an imperious glare directed at Lord Thomas.

“Are you Thomas Marlow?”

Her Lord pauses... but doesn't correct the armored man, simply nodding.

“Yes. I am.”

“You have been granted an audience with the King. You will come with us immediately.”

Sevvi's eyes narrow and flick across what she now identifies as 'Royal Guards'. Tch, they certainly look ostentatious enough to fit the title... but their skill leaves a lot to be desired. They're all stronger than Camilla at least, but that's not saying much. Though... if they all fought together, she, Camilla, and even Lord Thomas would be hard pressed to survive, let alone win.

“... Am I allowed to bring my retainers?”

The speaker's eyes trail away from Thomas for a moment, gliding over the rest of them before stopping on Sevvi. There's the briefest of pauses before he nods.

“Yes.”

“Very well then, lead the way.”

Hm. Probably the most prudent move, Sevvi is forced to admit. But at the same time... she almost wishes Thomas had decided to fight back. The battle would have been *glorious*.

-x-X-x-

A/N: Audience with the King in a single day! Look at Thomas moving up in the world~

Please let me know what you think either on Patreon or Discord! Your feedback, suggestions, and ideas for this story are keeping the inspiration flowing in a big way!