

“Normal speech”

‘Thought’

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

Well, as I anticipated, it took some time for this. I must really apologize to all those who await Continental War. I’m trying my best, but since it has such a complicated and different plot, it is really hard to write and I would prefer to release something good instead of some rushed and bad stuff. So, I’m taking my sweet time. I know it is no excuse for the long wait, but truly I don’t know what else to say.

As for this story, I would like to know what you think about bringing it to M rated. The major problem is the Eight Fingers stuff we are going to examine in this and the next chapters. Even the novels didn’t go into much detail over their inner workings. Well, read the chapter and let me know if I should change the rating.

I must say, I’m enjoying writing this so much more than I predicted, and you readers seem to agree with me. It is really relaxing since there is so much freedom in this setting, while CW has so much politics and stuff in it. It is for that reason that I decided to ‘upgrade’ this story’s status from a side project to a primary project on even ground with Continental War. Continue to support this story and don’t make me regret my decision.

Beta reader: Don Orbit (go check out his amazing works!); SirWertsalot (I wonder if doing all of this in one go was a mistake. Nah, that’s just the boring, rational part of my brain.

This is my day off, and if I want to spend it sipping tea and proofreading, I will! Yay, adulthood!)

Chapter 6: The Sorcerer and the Whore

The young blonde woman had her eyes fixed on one of the shops in the Great Square for several hours by now. Said shop was no normal shop. In only a month, it has become the place where a great deal of money passes through. That place was The Sorcerer's Shop. Rumours said that it was run by the greatest magic caster in the kingdom, Satoru, the arcane magic caster of the fifth tier, a foreigner that arrived not long ago at the capital and changed the economical balance built over decades in just a few weeks.

Not much is known about the man himself apart from his name. He said he came from a distant land to the east of the empire. The fact that he never took off his mask was also one of the reasons he was so mysterious.

The woman trembled a bit as cold wind hit her back. Winter was coming and the fact that she was wearing delicate, thin silk didn't help. However, she had to wear it as her seduction skills were far more effective with such a revealing cloth.

The wind made her mind return to reality as her eyes focussed once more on the shop. Due to the lack of information about the owner, she decided it would be better to observe him. Her superiors wouldn't mind having more information about him.

Unfortunately, her discoveries weren't worth the past 4 days of spying. She confirmed that the rumours about the regular visits of the Warrior Captain were true and the fact that a cloaked figure was always with him was curious. It was probably someone

from the royal faction, who didn't want to be recognized in public. That was the most valuable information she had gathered.

Yesterday she decided that she was finally going to complete her mission today. The higher ups didn't like to waste time if the information wasn't worth it. This was why she chose the best dress she had and was hidden in an alley, waiting for the magic caster to come out of his shop. She could feel the little needle in her sleeve that contained the paralyzing poison. If she did her job right, she would be able to rise through the ranks and reach the top.

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

As soon as the last customer left his shop, the undead magic caster sighed in relief. He may have an undead body, but his mind was still the same as his old self. Anyone would be exhausted after working 12 hours a day.

He proceeded to count the total income of the day. 'I'm beginning to amass quite a good sum,' he thought, before putting the money in a sack and putting it in his inventory, the safest place there was.

Normally at this time of the day, he would return upstairs and begin to work on restocking, but he could do it tomorrow since the next day was one of the religious days where people are not allowed to work.

He may as well go out for a walk today. Getting some fresh air would surely help him. As he came to that conclusion, his body moved toward the door. He exited his shop and locked the door behind him, while putting up a barrier against any living being that tried to enter.

The fresh night air hit him as he stepped onto the walkway. While he was undead, he could still feel the sensation of the wind on his body and it was quite pleasurable. Even after all these weeks, going out without a gas mask on his face was still quite a strange sensation. In Satoru's old world, the air was no longer breathable and so anyone who went outside would need a gas mask or they would die far sooner than expected.

He walked through the streets of the capital. The sun had already vanished, and the moon was high in the sky. It wasn't the first time Satoru had a night walk. By now he already had a mental map of the higher district of the city. He made sure to stay around that zone to avoid any kind of trouble. No sane thief would come into the most patrolled district to steal after all.

Satoru turned and entered one of the many empty small alleys. This move was not done because he wanted to get away from the noise, but because ever since he exited his shop, he felt like someone was watching him. If he was being followed, his stalker would have to reveal themselves if they wanted to continue to follow him.

He continued to walk, picking as many empty alleys as he could, until he finally sensed a presence not far behind him. He continued to walk as if he didn't notice the presence. 'If it comes down to combat, I will have the advantage if they think I'm not aware of them. They will not expect a sneak attack from someone they think is unaware of them.' He thought. That had been a lesson from the master strategist of Ainz Ooal Gown, Punitto Moe.

Satoru turned another corner and immediately stopped. His senses tensed as he cast some silent buff spells on himself. He

then turned and walked back around the corner he came from. As soon as he passed the corner, someone bumped into him. He was ready to cast a spell, but what he saw made him rethink his actions.

The person who stalked and bumped into him was a young woman around her late teens. She had delicate features, purple lipstick and mascara. She was quite pale and had long blonde hair a little darker than Renner's, but her most peculiar feature were her purple eyes. She wore a revealing outfit made of pink silk, not right for the season, that emphasized her generous cleavage.

The woman looked up at him, stunned for a moment, before smiling seductively.

“My, my, good sir, while I am for sale, I am still a woman. Before we come to the act, I would like to at least be introduced to each other.”

She purred as her hands began to wander on his robes. Satoru was petrified. He didn't know what to do. One moment he was ready for a battle the next an attractive young woman was trying to court him. ‘A prostitute?’ He wondered. Prostitutes still existed in Satoru's old world, but he never saw one before. They lived in organized establishments; to enter such a place, you would need a social status quite above the one of a common salary man. There were also the poor homeless girls, who would sell themselves in the streets in exchange for spending a night in a warm bed, but Satoru never considered them as prostitutes.

He forced his mind to come back from his memories and focus on the current problem. He needed to take control of the situation. He took a step back, creating some distance between him and the young woman.

“I apologize miss, I was in a hurry and didn’t see you.”

He said while lightly bowing his head. The woman seemed confused for a moment by his sudden politeness. Satoru decided it was the time to take his chance.

“As I said I’m in quite a hurry, so please excuse me.”

He said as he began to walk away, but then the woman launched herself at him and engulfed his arm in an embrace. Fortunately, his robes were thick and she couldn’t feel the hard bone under it.

“But sir, on such a splendid night it would be a crime not to indulge in the pleasure I can provide you. I will give you a discount.”

She said in a sweet innocent voice.

“No, thank you. I have affairs I must attend to.”

He said as he freed his arm and proceeded to leave once more. This time the woman closed again the distance between them and stood in front of him. She bent over to show him more of her cleavage and rose her skirt revealing a pair of violet panties.

“Come on sir! I will give you a round for free then. That’s a deal no one would decline, don’t you think?”

She said. While she said that, Satoru’s Emotional Suppression was working at full power to stabilize his peak of emotions. The woman seemed to take his silence as confirmation and closed the distance between them pushing her voluptuous body against his.

“Now, let’s see what is hiding behind this scary mask.”

She said, mixing a joking and seductive tone. Satoru didn’t know how to react. He saw her hand coming toward the mask hiding his face. ‘Why? Why?! Why can’t I have a moment of peace?!

This fucking woman just won't let me be! I just wanted to enjoy a little night walk! Is that too much to ask?!' In his head, a new emotion was beginning to stir, irritation. It was quickly growing, coursing through his body. The woman's hand reached his mask, but before Satoru could push the hand away the woman's eyes widened. They remained like that for what seemed to be a second, before the woman's body shook and she fell on Satoru.

The magic caster looked confused at her face. Her eyes were closed, but she was still breathing. She was unconscious, but why? Why would she just drop unconscious right there? Satoru looked around him in search of any clue and then he immediately realized it. His [Despair Aura] was active. There was no mistaking the dark aura that engulfed his body. He immediately suppressed it and the aura disappeared. 'Does it automatically activate every time I feel a negative emotion? Isn't the Emotional Suppression supposed to suppress those too?' He wondered, but immediately stopped that train of thought. He had more important stuff to deal with right now. The young woman laying against him unconscious was the first thing.

But what to do with her? Satoru wondered. He couldn't leave her here like that. Touch Me would punch him in the face just for suggesting that. Killing her was out of the question. After all, she was only trying to do her job. The most common thing would be to bring her to a temple. They would take care of her there, but he wouldn't want to risk it. [Despair Aura] was basically a wave of concentrated negative energy. If the priests analysed her and found traces of a large amount of negative energy, it would bring unpleasant questions.

Satoru sighed. There was only one thing he could do, but how could he bring her there without anyone seeing it? Surely if someone saw a masked man with an unconscious young woman in his arms, they would call the guards. He sighed again in resignation. He looked around to see if anyone was watching. After he was sure no one was there apart from them, he took the young woman in his arms and cast his spell.

“[Greater Teleportation]”

{Renner’s P.O.V.}

She elegantly sat at a table in her private chamber’s balcony. She rarely came out during the night in the past, but since she met Satoru, this became a routine.

In the days she couldn’t meet him, she would instead spend some time watching the city from the castle just to feel a little bit closer to her beloved.

She knew it was silly, but she just couldn’t contain herself when it came to her Satoru. Her body trembled at the thought of his strong arms around her and his big hand patting her head.

“Your tea, princess.”

The voice that interrupted her thoughts came from her left. A young girl stood there. She was a little older than Renner. She had golden blonde hair tied in an elegant twin drills hairstyle. Her emerald-green eyes shone in the moon light that seeped into the room. In her hands, she had two cups of tea. As soon as Renner acknowledged her presence, she placed the two cups on the table and sat in front of the princess.

This girl name was Lakyus Alvein Dale Aindra, daughter of the Marquis Aindra, and her new handmaiden since two weeks ago after the 'incident' occurred.

It all happened while she was visiting Satoru. Apparently one of her handmaidens was caught stealing from her private chambers. An investigation began on all her handmaidens and apparently the vast majority were caught with some of her private properties. Of course, they all claimed they were gifts from the princess and that was true. The only problem was that only Renner and the handmaidens were aware of such an exchange happening and when the judge asked if what they claimed was true, the princess had simply put on her best innocent expression and denied all their claims.

On the very same evening all the handmaidens, noble or not, paid the price of their actions. They were judged guilty of stealing from a royal princess and guilty of lying in front of a court. As punishment, they lost both their hands and tongue.

Renner internally smiled as she recalled the moment in her mind. The terror on their faces. The utter despair as they realized what their destiny was. They begged for her help. They begged her to save them. They cried and wet themselves in fear. All the while, Renner never lost her smile. This was it. The just punishment for speaking of her Satoru in that manner, as if he was inferior to them. They laughed at him and now they were paying the price. No one would insult her Satoru. No one.

“My princess, what is on your mind?”

Lakyus asked, noticing that Renner's eyes were fixed on the sky as she seemed to be deep in thought. Renner returned to reality.

“It’s nothing Lakyus. And how many times do I have to tell you, call me Renner.”

The princess said.

“That would be most unpolite of me my princess, but if you insist, I will oblige.”

The noble girl said. This was what Renner liked about her. she was no bootlicker. She would acknowledge her as a princess, but at the same time would not try to get on her good side for personal gain.

“Say Lakyus, do you like swords?”

Renner asked casually. Lakyus’ eyes widened in surprise at the specific question asked in such a casual tone. She shifted uncomfortably in her seat, looking anywhere but the princess.

“Why this question, my princess?”

“I saw how you looked at the new enchanted sword the Warrior Captain brought back yesterday. I don’t really know why you bother. To me, they all seem like chunks of metal pulled together. Those are things for men; surely not for ladies.”

‘This should work.’ She thought. Lakyus clenched her fists under the table.

“With all due respect princess, that was a fantastic piece of equipment. The platinum was perfect and well sharpened! Not to speak of the enchantment! I never saw an enchantment so strong that it would manifest as sparks all around the blade! Even a blind man could tell the art in that!”

As soon as the noble daughter realized what her outburst meant, she covered her mouth with her hands in horror of what she just

said. She was about to open her mouth again to apologize and try to limit the damage when she noticed the faint little smile on Renner's face.

"You are indeed a peculiar woman, Lakyus... say, would you like to meet the one who created that blade?"

The princess asked as her sky-blue eyes shone.

{Hilma's P.O.V.}

Hilma Cygnaeus woke up in an unknown bed. It wasn't the first time that such a thing had occurred, but it was the first time she couldn't remember what brought her to said unknown bed.

She tried to recall what happened before she lost consciousness. One by one the memories began to return to her and link with each other. She remembered her mission. Find and capture the magic caster known as Satoru who ran a shop in the Great Square.

The plan was simple. Seduce him, get close to him, and use the venomous needle to paralyze him. She remembered studying his behaviour for a few days before executing the plan.

She followed him during one of his rare walks. For some reason, he began to turn into empty alleys. At the time, she thought he may have perceived someone was following him. She remembered bumping into him while trying to follow him. Being discovered wasn't a problem. She was a high-class prostitute. She then tried to seduce him, but he seemed sneakier than she actually expected. He seemed even eager to get away from her.

But if something like that could stop her, she would never have been able to climb the ranks of Eight Fingers in the first place. She began to be more insistent and touchier. In all her years of

experience, she learned that men were easier to convince once they felt the touch of a woman. She remembered being surprised about how hard he seemed under those robes. He surely seemed bulky from the outside, but she never expected him to have such a good build. After all, weren't magic casters supposed to train the mind rather than the body?

She remembered thinking about having fun with him before completing her mission. The four gods only knew how much she was tired of those fat pig like noble pricks she had to service countless times before. But her target was a powerful magic caster this time and it was better not to risk it, so she went for his mask. The plan was to remove it and while caressing his face, sting him with the tiny needle. She remembered taking out the needle, while getting closer to his face, and then... then... the memory was foggy. She remembered fear, a lot of fear and nothing more.

Once everything was ordered in her head, Hilma decided to open her eyes. As she expected, she was in an unknown room. It was quite elegant. It even had a window from where she could see the Great Square. This only confirmed her theories about where she was. She stood up from the bed. It was probably a bad idea, but it was her only chance. She needed to escape from the window, but her plans were ruined since as soon as she stood up, she fell back on the bed. Her body simply couldn't handle that simple thing after all it had been through. Now she felt nauseated and about to vomit.

In that moment someone knocked on the door. Hilma was trying not to empty her stomach and didn't dare to open her mouth in fear of what could come out of it.

After almost a minute of silence the door slowly opened and from it came a tall man covered in dark robes. She knew the man. He was the magic caster Satoru, now her captor. This was the end for her. He probably already knew who she was and probably had ideas of what she wanted to do to him. Desperately, she tried to feel if the needle was still in her sleeve. Of course, it wasn't. It probably fell in that alley where she fainted.

There was only one reason why she was still alive, and that reason was for information. He would probably torture her until she spilled everything she knew and then kill her. Or maybe take her as his slave for his pleasure.

As her brain elaborated every possible outcome, the man closed the distance between them until he was next to her bed, with a little gesture of his hand a chair was summoned behind him. Hilma gulped as he sat. She never heard of magic capable of such a feat.

“How do you feel? Are you hungry?”

She blinked a few times. she surely didn't expect that. Was he playing dumb? But what would that accomplish? He already had all the advantages, there was nothing she could do to stop him.

“Umu, I didn't think the shock would be so great you would not be able to speak. I thought you lot weren't bothered by violence.”

He muttered to himself. She had to agree on that one. No Eight Fingers' agent would be concerned about the use or the sight of violence. He was now thinking she wasn't able to speak. This was bad. If he thought she was worthless he had no reason to spare

her life. She concentrated and used all her strength to open her mouth.

“I-I... a-a-am... f-fine...”

Those three words were all she managed to bring out. She couldn't see his reaction due to the mask covering his face.

“I see. You seem pale. Maybe something to eat would help you.”

He said with his usual deep tone. With another gesture of his gloved hand, he summoned what seemed to be a bowl of hot soup and placed it on her lap. As soon as the sweet smell reached her nose, her nausea became hunger. She immediately took the spoon with her right hand, but her trembling hand couldn't bring the soup to her mouth without spilling the majority of it back in the bowl.

As soon as the magic caster noticed her trouble, he took the bowl from her lap and the spoon from her hand. She looked in despair as her meal was taken away. She probably looked like a beaten puppy right now. The magic caster used the spoon to take some of the soup and then pointed the full spoon at her.

“Here, open your mouth.”

She didn't let him repeat himself and immediately opened her mouth to take in the spoon. The hot soup was a blessing for her dried mouth. She felt the delicious fluid go down her throat and warm up her cold trembling body.

The magic caster continued to feed her spoon after spoon until the bowl was empty. He placed the bowl and spoon on a nearby table before returning to her.

Now she was more confused than ever before. Why would he feed her? Why wasn't she in a cell instead of this comfortable bed? What was his goal with all of this? She still feared the person in front of her. She could feel something was wrong here, but she couldn't figure out what it was.

“Now that the conditions are more favourable, I think it would be a good time to begin our talk.”

He said in a business-like tone. Hilma couldn't do anything but nod in agreement. This was going to be the discussion that would decide her fate and she needed to give it her all to ensure her survival.

A.N.

Hope you liked it. We are finally entering the Eight Fingers arc. As always, review! I missed those a lot this past month!