

"Normal speech"

'Thought'

(Silent magic)

[Normal magic]

{Change of location, time or POV}

**Hey there guys and gals! Hope everything is going fine with you all! I have been quite busy these last weeks as we had to sort out a huge load of work left behind during the holidays!**

**But enough of my problems, enjoy the chapter!**

**THIS CHAPTER HAS NOT BEEN BETAED YET! (I will upload the betaed chapter as soon as I get it!)**

### Chapter 34: Into the Forest

Freedom, the ability to choose for oneself, the lack of chains around one's hands and leashes around one's throat. That is what, above all, Satoru wished for and he finally felt like he got it.

A beautiful illusion it might be, but an illusion he intended to bask in for as much as possible, nonetheless. Now... if it wasn't for the bickering children behind him, he could have enjoyed the sight of nature more freely.

"I told you! Fire is the best option when it comes to offensive magic! It can easily harm both the living and undead, normal monsters are hardly resistant to it! Lightning is just too limited in its uses, apart from very specific cases fire will always be better."

The Empire's noble argued.

“Fire is only well and good when the opponent isn’t naturally immune to it like most demons or monsters living in certain areas! Also, it is pretty weak against heavily armored opponents! Due to its large area of effect, lightning instead is perfectly capable of piercing any armor, unless enchanted, and its required precision makes it one of the deadliest branches of magic if aimed correctly!”

The brown-haired boy countered with indignation, as is his fellow student just insulted his mother out of the blue.

“What about ice?”

Asked the blond noble swordswoman of the kingdom who, so foolishly, decided to join the conversation. Both of his students turned back to her fire and lightning crackling in their blazing glares.

“”ICE IS LAME!””

They both cried out in indignation at the sole thought of using said element.

Satoru just felt like slamming his skull against a wall... he knew that having them read Ulbert’s guide to Newbies Arcane Magic Casters wasn’t a great idea... and yet, he did it nonetheless. ‘It would have been okay... they said... there was nothing to worry about... they said...’ he wallowed in his despair, as his head lowered his gaze fell on the figure currently pressed against his side.

Her long, blond hair falling like a cascade at the side of her visage. She had her eyes closed as if she was sleeping deeply, if she had a pair of white wings, Satoru could swear she was an angel, it was quite unreal considering her usual devilish smile, how could such a

visage produce that kind of expression was a mystery Satoru couldn't possibly solve.

'Is that gap moe enough for you Tabula?' he thought as he imagined his friend's expression at meeting a living representation of his ideal waifu's personality. He never understood the squid for brains' obsession over such things, he gave up after meeting the guy's first creation who literally caused Pero to disconnect from the game due to his heartbeat skyrocketing to dangerous heights.

He chuckled amusingly as he proceeded to pet the princess out of habit. Her blue eyes immediately snapped open focusing on him as if waiting for him to speak.

Meanwhile the ruckus in the backside of his cart subsided. He had to buy quite the cart for this expedition, he couldn't certainly expect them to fit in the small cart he used when he traveled to the Empire. He, instead bought one quite bigger, it was meant to transport large amount of goods or people and its cover was enchanted to be resistant to heat and humidity.

For the two weeks they traveled the jump in quality had been quite clear, he had also made sure to pass through his own territory so that they would avoid any unpleasant encounter. In the last months he had made sure to exterminate any outlaw in his territory through Seven Hands, he had no intention of leaving slavers, bandits and other scum to freely roam his lands. Thanks to that, the group had a pleasant trip overall.

"We are getting closer to the Forest of Tob, can you see it? Over there."

He pointed at the horizon with his gloved skeletal hand, even from their position the seemingly endless lines of trees were already

visible, even thought they would need almost another day of traveling before getting there.

“Lord Satoru, how are we going to transport all this into the forest? Surely, we cannot use the cart to advance into it.”

The Empire’s knight, Leinas, asked in her usual dead serious tone, gesturing to the supplies currently lying in the cart.

“Umu, I have my methods, do not concern yourself with minor details.”

The truth behind his calm words was that he actually had not thought about it. He was so busy planning the whole thing that he didn’t think about how his new, fantastic cart was going to be useless once they reached the edge of the forest. ‘Augh! For once I thought I invested my money in something useful... damn it!’ he scolded himself for his lack of foresight.

To his defense, he never actually saw the forest with his own eyes but knowing the forest had been dangerous and unexplored it was quite obvious he would not find anything like paved roads there.

The undead internally sighed, he just hoped nothing unexpected would come up from now on.

{Lizardman’s P.O.V.}

His day began as every other in the last year, he woke up at dawn and moved immediately out of his house. As the newly appointed chieftain of Green Claw, he was expected to attend to his duties from dawn to dusk.

He may have been elected due to his strength but his duties hardly ever needed battle prowess to begin with, he mostly dealt with

directing the hunters and managing food resources and the occasional construction here and there.

It was no wonder his brother decided to never run for the chief position, he was far too much of a free spirit to let himself be chained to one post.

Taking in the fresh morning hair he dug his fangs into one of the cleaned fish, savoring the taste of the muscles in his mouth. The Shortage War may have ended but food was still not easily found, they growing population will soon cause another shortage and a new war will break out , again hundreds will die and the cycle would repeat.

That is why he was trying to regulate their tribe birth rate, failing miserably he might add, both young and old were unable to be reasoned with during the mating season. And for each egg that came, he knew, there would be less food for all.

He slammed his scaled fist against the wall of his hut, denting it. He already had to force two of his tribesmen to become travelers as he knew that in a few months after the hatching of the eggs they would have starved.

But this wasn't the main reason why he felt nervous, no, the thing that put him on edge was the one who was going to leave today. He would have to leave in secret so that the elders couldn't stop him. They would surely be against losing such an asset, they would sooner exile the chief instead of him.

The lizardman advanced toward the edge of the forest where a lone figure was waiting for him.

“You don't have to do this.”

The chief said before the figure had the time to even greet him.

“Good day to you too, Shasuryu.”

The shorter lizardman greeted, ignoring his chieftain’s words.

“Brother, please, we can do this another way.”

Shasuryu continued his pleading, but his brother just shook his head.

“Three more hatched yesterday, and I am unwilling to see you exile another tribesman and cause more pain to our people, I am willing to go, and so I will go.”

The shorter lizardman stated with a resolute tone. Shasuryu grasped his brother’s shoulders.

“I promised mother I would protect you no matter what, I cannot do this if you decide to leave.”

He tried his last resort which only made his brother growl dangerously as he shoved his brother away.

“Don’t you dare use mother against me brother! I will not stand for it!”

He answered back angrily.

“And you already kept your promise, you made sure I would survive the war, this choice, is one I make by my own volition, if I end up perishing due to it, the only one who should be blamed it’s me.”

He continued more calmly this time.

Shasuryu bit his tongue to force down a retort. Becoming a traveler was almost like a death sentence, most never returned. The most optimistic thought was that they may have found a better life out there, but the harsh reality was that most of them probably died to other inhabitants of the forest.

No matter how strong his brother was, he still remained one lizardman, he would probably perish like the others if a group of enemies surrounded him. In short, this might be the last time he ever saw his brother.

“Zaryusu... what in the world are you trying to do out there?”

He finally asked seeing as his brother would not back down and was dead serious about doing this.

“I am curious to see the world brother, for as long as I could wield a weapon I have known nothing but war and death... I finally want to see what else is there in the world to experience, and maybe find a solution to our food problem.”

Zaryusu answered honestly his brother’s query.

“This is so like you brother...”

Shasuryu sighed in defeat.

“The elders would have demanded that you mated with as many females as possible before leaving, you know that right? Are you sure you want to pass on that?”

The chief smirked at the embarrassed squeal of his brother, it was no secret in the tribe how bad he was with the opposite gender. Many females tried to seduce him after he won against the

previous wielder of Frost Pain. They didn't account for him being as dull as a rock though.

“Stop joking around brother, i am sure you will be good enough for them, after all you are the strongest lizardman when I'm not around.”

That comment was a low blow from his part, but not one uncalled for. Shrsuryu gave his brother a heavy pat on the shoulder before hugging him.

“Be safe out there... or else I will kill you myself, Frost Pain or not.”

He said as he felt Zaryusu reciprocate the gesture.

“Make sure Green Claw is taken care of then, or I will do the same.”

His brother answered. And, as the sun began to rise from the horizon, his younger brother departed .

Shasuryu stayed there until he could no longer see the form of his brother in the distance before marching back to the village.

He will have some explaining to do.

{Edge of the Forest of Tob}

{Lakyus' P.O.V.}

The blond darted to the side as she dodged the thrust of her opponent, retaliating with one of her own which was easily swapped aside.

She pushed forward nonetheless, trying to swing at her opponent with her second sword. Being an attack coming not from her main hand, it was quite sloppy if compared to her normal ones, her



opponent had all the time to dodge and send a powerful kick her way. Lakyus had just the time to put her main blade between her and the armored boot, effectively blocking the kick but severely weakening her grasp around her blade, an advantage her opponent didn't wait to exploit, her spear swapped at the base of her blade sending it flying away from Lakyus' hand.

“Shit.”

She cursed under her breath. She could have avoided it if only she could use her Martial Arts. Her last stand didn't last long and her second blade was sent flying away like the other.

Lakyus fell on her back breathing heavily. It was clear by now that she was having far more difficulty than she hoped for wielding two blades at the same time.

Her head turned and her eyes gazed at her second blade, a black obsidian hilt followed by a glowing red blade with ripples engraved into it.

The blade was infused with a 4<sup>th</sup> tier fire spell, Satoru gifted it to her for her last birthday, he said that it would be the perfect opposite of her other blade, having more... coverage... that is what he called it.

She saw an offered hand above her and grasped it with her own as the Empire knight pulled her up. It was unreal how much the gap in power still was between them, she knew that Satoru gave her an advantage when fighting in the Arena, but after almost a year of training she was no way near the sheer skill Leinas had with her spear.

“Well done My Lady, your prowess with your left hand has greatly increased.”

While the praise was welcomed, Lakyus still felt undeserving of it, master Brain would have mocked her stance and imprecision with her second blade 'are you so weak that switching hands will make the difference between victory and defeat?!' she could hear his words in her mind already. And he would have been probably right, what if something happened to her main hand during battle? Would she simply lie there and let her opponent slay her?

"It's still not good enough, I must be as good as with my main hand before finally being sufficiently satisfied."

She said shaking her head.

"You are too hard with yourself young Lakyus."

Intervened Gazef from the side where he was observing their spar.

"You are already leagues above anyone your age, I bet you could give a run for their money even to most adventurers, why are you in such a rush?"

He asked puzzling her, did he not understand how important it was she got the power she needed early on?

"No one my age has my aspiration though, and to achieve what I want to achieve I will have to be far stronger than everybody else."

She said in the most serious tone she could muster. Gazef said nothing as he only seemed to stare at her but his eyes seemed lost in a memory only he could see.

"LOOK OUT!"

The panicked shout of Rayne took everyone by surprise and before Lakyus could understand his words, she saw a zapping bolt of lightning heading her way. She surely would not have time to

dodge it. As she prepared to take the hit the form of Leinas interposed between her and the arcane spell taking the hit with a grunt of pain.

Lakyus immediately jumped back up placing her hands on Leinas' back.

“[Light Healing]!”

She was glad she spent some time learning divine magic now, the holy texts she used were the ones venerating the God of Water, also known as the God of healing, harmony and peace. She thought that such a God would be the one representing most what she aimed for in life.

The texts preached about the need for equilibrium in the world and how no one should abuse what they have, how the faithful will be rewarded with healing and how peace is the only road toward a world devoid of violence.

But this wasn't the time to think back on her embraced faith. She felt her self-proclaimed knight exhale a breath of relief as the healing spell affected her.

“Oh Gods! Are you all right?!”

In the meantime, the two casters reached them and the male was fretting over Leinas.

“It's fine, I have been hit with worse things.”

She said in her usual emotionless voice. Rayne didn't even have the time to breath in relief as the top of his fellow apprentice's staff hit him on the head.

“You idiot! I told you you couldn't possibly cast a 3<sup>rd</sup> tier spell!”

Arche said furious at her fellow caster.

“I-I thought it was going fine, t-then I felt it slip out of control...”

The boy said, clearly mortified about his slipup.

“You managed to control 2<sup>nd</sup> tier spells only a few months ago! How could you expect to jump to 3<sup>rd</sup> so soon’!”

The blond caster continued. It was a statement on its own that Rayne didn’t protest nor retort her accusations. But Lakyus had no intention of letting the boy wallow in his own misery and guilt.

“Look, everything is fine, errors happen, let this be a lesson in humility.”

That sounded like something Gazef would say, and something she would want to hear if her errors ever caused damage to others.

The down casted boy only nodded before mumbling another apology and running back to their camp.

The sun was already on its way down and dinner would probably be ready soon. ‘Who knew Renner could cook so well?’ that was one of the things Lakyus would have never expected from her friend since she never saw her cook before. When she asked the princess just said she started exercising after their return from the Empire, so that the next time they would do a similar travel she would be ready to do her part.

That showed her once more what an incredible person she was in Lakyus’ eyes, she really had no idea how her friend could be so caring of others even when she lived a life of absolute riches and entitlement. If it wasn’t for Renner she had no idea how much of a spoiled brat she would be right now, or if she would have even

pursued her dream or just settled back for a boring life of nothing and resentment.

Making sure once more her knight friend was alright she went back to the camp.

{Next day}

{Satoru's P.O.V.}

He was having fun, for the first time in a very long time, Satoru was genuinely having fun, not amusement, not entertainment, no! this was the true sensation of enjoyment he only felt when he was going around doing something with his friends back in Yggdrasil.

He almost forgot by now how good it was to not have to worry about anything else but enjoying what he was doing. And the best thing was, his enjoyment wasn't strong enough to trigger any annoying Emotional Suppression! It wasn't a spike of strong emotions, it was just a calmly flowing river of positivity.

In that moment he felt like grinning like a fool. This was the best! Definitely! The beauty and thrill of exploring the unknown was just something he could not possibly pass on.

The forest wasn't even that interesting but just having the possibility of exploring it freely made him content.

"We should turn right soon."

The melodic tune of the voice belonging to the princess, currently perched up on his right shoulder like a giant blond parrot, made him return to reality.

It had been his idea to not have Renner walk on the difficult ground that was the forest's but he didn't expect to have to carry her all the way to their destination.

Not that he minded, of course, it was rather amusing to see the short princess check the map and direct them.

He was glad he had the adventurers scan the forest in advance, otherwise he would have had no idea the forest was actually divided in three main territories controlled by three powerful beings... or at least powerful in the New World's standards. He was pretty sure he would not find anything above level 40 here.

The Giant of the East, the Demon Snake of the West, and the Beast of the South. He would have enjoyed hunting them under normal circumstances. But he wasn't here for that, and not knowing how strong they were or any of their abilities it would have been a needless risk for his companions. Still... he might attempt it in the future.

The adventurers managed to trace a path that only bordered on the Three Monsters' territories and never invaded them directly, it could be called a no man's land where it was pretty safe to travel unnoticed and unbothered.

Some of the adventurers lost their life to trace this path but most were foolish ones who thought they could take on one of the Three Monsters and faced them instead of retreating back to the disputed lands or another territory entirely.

In the hours they spent traveling the forest they didn't meet a single inhabitant once, that actually made Satoru even more curious to meet one and possibly interrogate them. Did the few previous months of adventurers mapping out the area discourage

them from passing through the most used routes? Or did they usually stay on their own turf avoiding to crossing in someone's other? Or was it a completely different reason altogether?

He nonetheless looked down at the map in his hands and indeed asserted the truth in Renner's words. They could have indeed continued straight forward and reached the mountains earlier, but they would have to cut through the territory of the Demon Snake. The safer option was instead to turn and pass alongside the border and, while they were at it, explore the not far away lake that lied there.

If all proceeded well, they should be there in around two days of walking.

Normally it would have been impossible to orient themselves in the forest, but he had instructed the adventurers to leave multiple signs and indications both for the adventurers coming after them and him. The most recognizable marks were those on trees' bark. Then there were the, rudimentary built, signposts that usually were knocked down by the wildlife.

In that moment his thoughts returned to reality as he felt a nagging sensation on the back of his mind. It was kind of weird and he wasn't sure what it had been for but a fraction of a second before realizing it.

He had been so used for years to deactivate any detection skill he possessed that the sensation became completely foreign to him. But now it was clear that multiple entities were approaching them.

“On your guard, they are coming from north-east.”

He told his companions who immediately stopped and took a fighting stance ready to confront anything coming out of those tree lines.

“Multiple beings, uhm... twelve if I’m not mistaken.”

He added as he silently casted an anti-projectile spell on the area around him, as well as a damage reduction spell on Renner. After all, if there was anyone at risk here, it was her, and Satoru wasn’t willing to take any risks.

The sound of rustling was growing nearer by the second, he saw both Arche’s and Rayne’s hands tremble as they prepared to cast their spells. It couldn’t be helped, after all this was their first time in a somehow dangerous situation.

He didn’t have much time to encourage them as the next second gobbling became to appear from the tree line, approaching the group with incredible swiftness, rusty daggers in hand and murder in their eyes.

“[Cinder’s Rain]!”

“[Bolt]!”

He felt some form of pride in seeing his apprentices not hesitate in casting their spells.

As he expected Arche’s spell managed to stop the momentum of their charge without killing any of them, that was natural as hers was a mere AOE spell not meant for great damage.

The bolt of lightning, on the other hand, ripped a hole in the unfortunately enough goblin who was hit by it, making Rayne the first to down an enemy in their short-lived exploration.



Seeing the end of their comrade, the goblins decided it would be better to not make themselves such easy targets and scattered in the bushes all around them.

“Circle!”

Ordered Gazef as all the members of his party formed a circle so to not let any blind spot available for their opponents.

For a few intense, tension filled moments nothing could be seen or heard apart from the rustling in the bushes all around them.

Then, out of nowhere, two goblins jumped Lakyus, who was nothing but ready to receive them.

“{Instantaneous Flash}”

She called out her Martial Art as she slashed the two demi-humans in half at an inhuman speed.

“Two down, five to go.”

She mumbled loud enough for all to hear. But apparently the goblins had not been idle in the meantime as two more jumped out of the crown of the trees around them. They probably climbed up there while the first assault failed.

But it was of no use as one was impaled by Lainas’ lance long before he could even get near them and the other was skewered by Gazef.

As all this was happening Satoru was merely focusing his senses on those who had yet to appear, one was currently running in their direction while three more stayed back.

The heavy steps thundered into the forest as the form of the charging enemy was revealed. 'Augh! Why are ogres designed to be so hideous to the eyes' Satoru lamented as his two students began to cast their spells on the approaching monster who just shrugged them off, the pain only enhancing his rage. That was until Satoru rose his hand. A silent (Lightning) and the screams of the demi-human were no more as his head was completely gone leaving his body to crumble on the forest's floor.

Satoru's felt the presence of the remaining goblins fade away as they retreated, probably fearing their incoming doom if they tried to attack them again.

Thought for some reason the other three presences who didn't move from their position till that moment decided to charge forward together.

This time the very earth rumbled as their foe charged them. It didn't take a great eye for all to spot them from quite far away. Two more ogres were running toward them with their wooden maces raised in the air threateningly, while the third was a demi-human with a bluish skin unharmed but not less threatening.

"A troll?"

Asked Gazef to no one as if surprised to see the creature.

"Are they rare around here?"

Asked Satoru with all the calm of someone discussing the weather and not someone who was being charged by three giant demi-humans.

"I thought they would be deeper inside the forest, their regeneration is said to be unmatched, we will need to land a

killing blow as soon as possible or it might outlast us in terms of stamina.”

He offered his advice, probably more to the youngster rather than Leinas or Satoru

“Well then, Lakyus, Arche, Rayne, I leave the left ogre to you three, I will take the ogre on the right, while Gazef and Leinas will take the troll.”

Satoru offered. He wasn't too worried as he could take care of all of them in just a moment if the need came to be.

“Make sure the Princess is safe Satoru.”

Was the only answer of the Warrior Captain before he and the Empire Knight charged the blue skinned demi-human.

The magic caster almost facepalmed, in the thrill of the battle he forgot he had a royal burden currently perched up on his shoulder.

“What do you say Renner, what kind of spell should I use?”

He decided to play a game with the princess as he scanned the situation, making sure everybody was doing fine.

“They are so horrid to look at... but fire could risk burning down the forest, that would be a big problem.”

The princess said, he was actually trying to get her to relax with his previous question and didn't expect an actual answer. He thought she would have been scared of the situation instead she almost sounded bored. ‘You are quite a brave little thing...’ he told himself while raising his hand, an adequate spell already in mind.

“I think I may have a solution for that [Acid Shot]”

He casted the spell as a ball of acid comparable to a normal [Fireball] rushed toward the ogre. Its wails as his flesh, muscles and bones melted away were agonizing and put even Satoru, who didn't expect that result at all, on edge.

'Holy crap! The hell I just did?! This isn't Yggdrasil! The acid is actually acid here!' he felt his panic rise as he had no intention of traumatizing Renner in such a way. His only hope was that the girl closed her eyes when the macabre spectacle began.

He turned his head to gaze at Renner but the only thing he saw when gazing in those sky-blue eyes was cold indifference. Her flat expression and lack of reaction actually sent a shiver down Satoru's spine. He was far too used to her joyful and playful demeanor to remember that this was her actual default expression when dealing with everything outside her circle of special people.

He guessed that she already saw people dying and even ordered to have some killed. But till this very moment Satoru never realized or even considered the long-time consequences of it all.

'No child should have gone through this... seeing people die... forced to choose between having others killed or seeing your family killed... and being despised all the same no matter the choice' his mind darkened. For all he liked to think he had it hard the two things weren't even comparable. He was a grown man for fuck's sake! He was almost 30 years old and she was a mere child, not even a third of his age!

He should have been there for her after it all happened, instead, he was dealing with his own petty problems.

Did he not learn anything from Yggdrasil? Was he really so self-absorbed and selfish that he couldn't understand what was happening around him until it smacked him in the face?

Was all the progress he made with her during the last two years lost to his negligence?

His hand moved before he could understand his own intentions. He pat her head the way he knew she adored, light and constant, before his hand descended to cup her cheek into his hand, resulting in him cupping half of her head due to the difference in sizes.

He gently turned her head toward him.

"I am here now, it will be alright."

Those words came to his mind. The same words his mother told him so many years ago when he used to return from school crying due to his loneliness and inability to make friends, and how anyone just found him to be a weirdo.

They were just meaningless and empty words, but for him, they meant the world. And even when his mother was no more and all he had left was Yggdrasil, those words still made sure he stayed alive, only that this time it was his friends who were there for him.

So, when the blond girl met his gaze and smiled, that inhuman and devilish smile, he could do nothing more but feel happiness fill his heart as his words had finally meaning for someone other than himself.

{That Night}

{Renner's P.O.V:}

She had been thinking about it the whole day... no, she had been thinking about it the since the very moment she first started cooking during this adventure.

She once again stole a glance at Satoru's mask as they all sat there in front of the campfire, enjoying their well-earned meal she cooked with her own hands.

The first time she did it she was insistent Satoru tried it, that was the main reason she started practicing at all. She wanted her Satoru to eat her homemade cuisine. It didn't come to her mind till the last moment that there was something in the way, physically speaking. The mask was in the way.

Sure, he took his plate went a few meters away and enjoyed his meal. He made a point in telling her how good it was and complimented her profusely. Something that made her heart hammer in her chest and literally made all those hours spent on practicing worth it all.

But the point remained, the mask was still there. And, despite what a lesser being would think, she had been troubled at the thought of removing it.

Not that she could, but she guessed that she will sooner or later see what was behind that mask. And she didn't like it at all. The sole thought troubled her, and she thought about why this happened countless times during the last weeks.

And today, she reached a conclusion.

Since she met him, Satoru had always been the masked magic caster who brought her first true smile out, the man who made her heart flutter and beat like never before, the man who gifted her a

dream and a future of her own creation. And that man... did not have a face in her mind.

To give him one would have been insulting even. She tried to picture how he would look without his mask, but no matter how many faces or features she tried to mix, all the end results felt wrong. She simply could not give him a form, he should not have a form, Satoru was no mere man, he was a concept in her mind.

Satoru was freedom, Satoru was happiness, Satoru was life. No form would be adequate for such a being. And she did not wish to know what lied behind that mask, for whatever it was, it was surely wrong.

Her musings were interrupted when she felt the hand of Lakyus grasp her shoulder and pull her back. In that moment she came back to reality only to gaze at her friend, confused on her sudden actions.

But her friend's gaze was not on her, no, it was pointed at something beyond her or the group around the campfire.

The princess followed the gaze of her appointed knight only to see dark yellow eyes staring back from the edge of the tree line.

By now everyone else had stopped eating and was staring back at the figure who took a step forward allowing the light of the fire to barely illuminate its form.

Renner never saw anything like it. Its scaly body was certain far more graceful and elegant than the hard filthy skin of goblins and ogres and the way the light reflected on them was quite entrancing.

It stood on two feet and had two arms, and that is where any resemblance with a human ended, for the rest of his body was certainly reptile in nature. His powerful and defined jaw hanged a little open as if indicating the creature's curiosity or even shock at their presence.

It was wearing some clothes covering the lower part of his body and a long scaly tail was the only thing showing itself from under it, swishing from side to side, like a cat who didn't know what to do next.

Gazef was the first to recover from the general shock and slowly stood up as if to not alarm the strange demi-human. A hand firmly on his enchanted blade.

The figure's gaze immediately darted to him and he shifted a little making something shine from its side. Now that the princess looked better there was something hanging from his clothes, something that was glinting in the darkness, probably reflecting the flames of their campfire.

Slowly but steadily the being raised both his hands showing he had nothing in them.

"I apologize for the intrusion."

The voice baffled Renner, it was clearly male but it had an accent and a tone she was sure she never heard before, something that wouldn't fit a human.

"I did not mean to disturb you, I just saw a light in the distance and went to investigate."

The male demi-human continued explaining. She saw like his words and demeanor were helping to defuse the tension around



the camp, but no one dared to lower their guard. Gazef only nodded at the demi-human's words but before anyone could say anything Lakyus spoke up.

“A-are you a Lizardman?”

She said her eyes as wide as plates. The creature, now known as Lizardman, shifted his gaze once more fixing his eyes on her friend.

“Uhm yes, I am, I apologize for my rudeness, allow me to present myself, my name is Zaryusu... Zaryusu Shasha.”

**A.N.**

**Bet you didn't expect that eheheh...**

**We are just getting started, and I bet you all have your own ideas on how this will go, and I am surely eager to hear them.**

**So don't forget to review/comment!**

**See you next time and stay safe!**