

**The Transgracian Academy for the Magical Arts. Dragon's Heart Tower, Level 23,  
Residence 30. Local Time: 2100 Hours.**

**Ilunor**

The end was coming.

And I was fated to spend it alone.

Surrounded not by family or kin, nor those bound by oath and blood, but with a guard at my door, and a cell unbecoming of a noble of house Rularia.

But perhaps this was a fitting end.

For even that latter assertion was now categorically untrue given my most recent of brash actions.

*So this was how it felt. To have reached the conclusion to a story before it even had a chance to develop. To end one's tale in the first quarter, before the rising tension was even established. To become nothing but a footnote, the loose end of another, far larger, far more malicious tale. A frayed knot whose only purpose was to be tied off and forgotten.*

That was the worst part of it.

Knowing that I was now a footnote to a series of stories destined for so much more than myself. Talunor, Thacea, Thalmin, and even the infernal *newrealmer*.

Theirs were stories yet to be fated, yet to be ensconced in brick and mortar. And whilst the fates of the latter three would probably end as abruptly as my own... they at least had the chance to become something *more* than just a footnote. For at least their legacies will be enshrined by the disruption they had on the Status Eternia.

At least their tales would serve as warnings for those who may challenge the Nexus.

At least they would *have* a legacy.

A legacy, *any* legacy at all right now was what I so desperately craved to leave behind before it was too late.

But that was no longer an option for me. Because for me to have any legacy at all, would be a liability for those I still cared about, for the lineage and the name I dared not disrupt as a result of my own short-sighted mistakes.

It was a surreal experience, staring at the Lupinor from the foot of my bed, knowing well that tomorrow his life would be merely mildly disrupted; his trajectory otherwise unaffected by my passing.

It was frustrating to know that the world, and all of the other stories progressing within it, would continue unabated, unaffected, completely ignorant that my own journey has since come to a conclusion.

It was insulting, to feel the bed beneath my form, knowing well that it would be handed off to some would-be peer.

It was infuriating, knowing that no matter what I did, said, or spoke now, that my very presence meant *nothing*.

In a way, it felt like I was already dead, a soul in transit, existing only for the moment and nothing more.

The worst part of it however, was the understanding that the end to my story was not an unfortunate tale of victimhood, nor of malicious conspiracy... It was merely one that was born of the convenience of others, taking advantage of the oversight that came only from the ambitions of my own pride.

If only I hadn't dropped that confounded bracelet.

If only I hadn't entered that elf hideaway.

If only I hadn't sat down with this insipid group.

If only I hadn't miscalculated my cunning and control.

If only I hadn't thought myself the potential *leader* to a pair of outcasts.

If only I had been more conservative, more cautious with my approach.

If only...

If only.

I finally stood up from the bed, Thalmin peering over his shoulder to observe my motions, like the true *guard dog* he was.

But his concerns were misplaced.

There was nowhere for me to go.

Nothing for me to do.

I could no longer count on the Nexus, and I could no longer infringe on my home.

The newrealmer was my only hope, and with her final departure, she so clearly implied that my fate was not worth fighting for.

I knew this... because if I was in her position, I would've thought the same thing.

It was the smartest thing for her to do.

And whilst I *could* have escaped with this invisibility cloak in hand, escaping my fate would mean dooming my line.

It was something that was simply unacceptable.

And so I decided to wait.

To wait for the inevitable conclusion to my story.

To wait and observe, as my time came to a swift-

**SLAM!**

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**Emma**

Saving the small thing was now top on the priority list.

**[TIME SENSITIVE OBJECTIVE: SAVE ILUNOR RALARIA]**

It was so urgent that I even set it as such on my HUD for good measure, the typo being evidence of that fact.

But before I saved him, I wanted to start dishing out some long deserved just-desserts. Starting by returning the favor for each and every time he gave me and the rest of the gang mini heart attacks.

By pulling a page straight from his book: slamming the door wide open with a **THWACK** and a **SLAM**.

His reactions said it all, or rather, the loud *thump* coming from his short fall was enough to speak for itself.

Those colorful reactions were good enough for me to finally make my entrance, as I hopped in with the force of a hundred caffeinated post-doctoral, committee-appointed, candidates on their first round of thesis defenses in the slaughterhouse that was the AOA.

“I told you I’d be back.” I announced loudly over the vocoders, slamming the door shut behind me with *less* of a vendetta this time around.

Finding myself above Ilunor’s shocked and flustered form, I couldn’t help but to cock my head with a degree of incredulous confusion. “What? You didn’t think I wouldn’t keep my word did you? I told you, you could at least count on me coming back right?”

The Vunerian, perhaps for the first time since I first had the displeasure of meeting him, remained utterly silent at that question. His expressions never shifted from what I could only describe as a shocked vacant look of disbelief, followed closely by small, little abrupt gasps that *almost* formed into words, but prematurely stopped before any could leave his snout.

“Erm, Earth to Ilunor, come in Ilunor, you still in there?” I asked once more, tentatively reaching a hand out to shake the blue thing’s shoulder, only for him to finally snap out of it before I had the chance to do so.

“Indeed you are.” He finally responded, somehow, through some means, inexplicably returning right to that darker, brooding, desperate tone he’d used right before I left for the library.

It was jarring to see how easily the little thing could slip back into that mentality so easily, but I guess it was par for the course for a life of cutthroat nobility.

“And now that you’ve returned, I believe we may resume our conversation.” He continued, trying to grapple and once more take over the reigns of the conversation.

But I wasn’t having it.