

CHAPTER 17

We now take our story a few steps back.

The day after Sora and Ginko's first date, deep in the depths of a cave west of Nogard known as 'Vanishing Cave', a young woman sat in a makeshift throne made of rocks as two trolls fanned her with giant leaves. She held in her hand a cold glass of juice, made from local berries.

Her other hand held a photograph of a young man known as "Sora Ganji".

"Heheheheheh, so totally my type..."

One of the trolls asked her, "Mistress, why do you keep laughing at that picture?"

She glared at him.

"Didn't Locke tell you my plans? *groan* Can't expect anything from anyone..."

She jumped out of her seat into a pair of fluffy slippers and stomped towards a section of the wall behind her. She tapped in a specific pattern on the wall and it opened a secret passage which led into a hallway with 6 doors, three on each side.

She headed straight for the furthest door on the right and pounded loudly on it.

"Locke! I know you're in there!"

The door slowly opened, revealing a wrinkly old troll. He was about 5'2" with sparse white hair and his tusks were dull from age. He was obviously nearsighted as he wore large glasses that looked like they were falling apart.

He said in a kindly voice, "Whatever is the matter, Mistress?"

The woman crossed her arms.

"I thought I told you to tell EVERYONE what I was planning!"

Locke scratched his head.

"But, I thought I did."

"Yeah, well those two buffoons in my throne room weren't aware of it!"

She failed to realize only one of them had claimed this.

"Oh, that's right!" He said, pounding his clenched hand into his palm.

"Morpheus was out picking berries when I told everybody. I told myself I'd tell him when I got back, but I must've forgotten. Can you imagine that?"

The woman was steaming mad at this point.

"If a single one of you acts like you don't know what's going on, my whole plan could be found out! Get your act together and fix it!"

"Oh, certainly, Mistress... I didn't mean to offend you."

"Good, cuz we've all got a lot riding on this. I'm heading over to the village for a minute to get some snacks, let those buffoons know I'll be back soon."

"Okay." He hobbled towards the entrance to the secret passage.

"*sigh* Dealing with them makes me hungry."

She snapped her fingers and the scenery around her warped, quickly changing into that of a small, rural village.

Huts made of mud and straw lined the streets, as well as water wells here and there.

As she walked through the streets, she heard the laughter of children playing. But it wasn't human children, it was troll children. For this was Tenretni, the troll village.

She stopped in the elder's house and the elder's wife, Ethel, greeted her with hospitality. She asked for some snacks for her post, and Ethel brought out some fresh cookies she'd just finished baking.

"Thanks, your cookies are the best! Better than anything they served back THERE..."

"Ohoho, you flatter me so, Mistress."

The young woman excused herself and, once she got back outside, snapped her fingers again, returning to her throne in Vanishing Cave.

She relaxed in her seat and snacked on the cookies.

It brought a smile to her face when she thought of how much better all their lives were going to become soon.

"Any day now they should be sending him."

2 Weeks later. The day before the attack.

The young woman sat in her throne of stone brooding.

She impatiently tapped her foot.

"Benny, Chet, why has nothing happened?"

The two trolls in charge of guarding her today looked at each other and shrugged.

"Um, is it because of the bats?"

"Of course it's not because of the bats! I'm saying why has that stupid kingdom not done anything since sending all those losers last month?!"

"Uhhh..."

"Never mind. *SIGH*"

She rested her head on her fist and thought.

"Well, if they aren't going to do anything, I'm going to have to."

She motioned to her guards.

"Benny! Chet! Call everyone together, I have an important announcement!"

They saluted her.

"R-right away, Mistress!"

Inside the door opposite Locke's in the secret passage, a gathering of the officials of Tenretni was beginning. But the host was no troll, it was in fact, a human girl.

Marissa Enclavius slammed her hands down onto the large rickety table in the center of the room.

"Okay, does anybody know why we've gathered today?"

The trolls looked around at each other in confusion.

"Of course not... Listen!"

Their attention returned to her.

"Our plan had been going smoothly, we set off those smoke bombs to cover the party, I successfully planted that ransom note before escaping with my warp magic, we fended off that group of losers, and to top it all off, they found a super mega hottie to send to save me!"

One of the trolls raised her hand.

"What is it?"

"Um, wouldn't the royal family know you had that...uhhh, whatchamacallit magic?"

Marissa rolled her eyes.

"*sigh* I told you before, I've been keeping it secret so they don't set any dumb restrictions on it. Just think about it, I can go to the candy shop anytime I want and buy as much as I can eat! Eheheheh... Oh, I'm drooling."

She wiped the drool from her mouth and continued.

"Ahem, anyway, our plan was going great, except for the fact that it's been weeks and nothing's happened. So I say if they aren't going to do anything, we bring the fight to them!"

The trolls talked amongst themselves for a minute.

"But we don't want to hurt anybody..."

"You don't have to, just bust up some stuff in the streets, it'll create the same effect. And if you bring me along, I still get to be rescued by my prince!"

"Um, isn't the Prince your brother?"

"Not THAT Prince! I was speaking figuratively!"

The trolls looked confused.

"A-anyway, get the warriors together, we strike first thing in the morning!"

And so we return to our current time, Sora and Ginko stand befuddled by the sight of two trolls lightly bashing on a carriage they had so recently been pulling, while a woman inside the carriage screamed unconvincingly for help.

"Kyaaaa! If only there was a strong man here to save me!"

Sora turned to Ginko.

"Uh, should we help her?"

"I...think?"

Sora and Ginko inched towards the carriage. The trolls noticed this and consulted the woman inside.

"Mistress, they're coming closer, what should we do now?"
She whispered back in an angry voice, "You idiots, don't talk to me like that, you'll blow our cover!"
"Um, can I ask what's going on?" Sora asked, standing right next to the carriage.
"Eep! Get back to your post!" She frantically whispered.
Ginko's ears picked up something.
"Wait, I know that voice... Princess?!"
"The Princess?!"
"Aaahhhh! Save me!"
Ginko flew up to the curtain that covered the carriage's interior and pulled it back.
"W-why are you being carted around like this? Why do you seem so chummy with these trolls?"
"N-n-n-no! You're mistaken! These trolls are dragging me all around town for their own enjoyment!"
She spotted Sora outside.
"Oh, my hero! Save me!"
Sora, with a dumbfounded look frozen on his face, just stood there as he replied.
"It...doesn't look like you NEED saving."
"Just what's going on here, Princess?"
"Mistress, they seem to have found us out, what do we do?"
Ginko was confused again.
"Mistress? Why are they calling you that?"
"GAAAAAH!!!!!! There's no other option left at this point! I'm calling in HIM!"
The trolls guarding her jumped back.
"N-no, Mistress, you can't! He's too strong!"
"Y-yeah, it took us all day just to lock him up last time! Milton is still healing his broken arm..."
The other troll frowned and looked at his buddy.
"Yeah, *sniff* he hasn't been able to do any of his gardening since then."
"I don't care, I'm getting him!"
She snapped her fingers and was gone.
"Whuh?!"
"Huh?! Where'd she go?"
Ginko looked around the carriage.
"I don't know, she was here a moment ago..."
Half a minute later she reappeared, but next to her was a peculiar looking troll. He had pale white skin instead of the normal bluish grey, he acted much more animalistic than a normal troll, oh, and he was about 10 feet taller than the average troll.
"Sic 'em, Bart!"
'Bart' roared tremendously, shaking the ground and slobbering all over the ground around him.
He first turned to the Princess.
"Wha?"
With frightening intensity, he smacked her into the side of a building.
"Princess!"
"Mistress!"
The two groups shouted.
Ginko flew straight over to her to see if she was alright.
"Phew...Okay, she's fine, just knocked out. Sora! We need to stop this thing!"
"Right! You two wanna help?"
Sam and Steve looked at each other, and then at Sora.
"We're not very good at fighting. But we'll do what we can."
"Great!"
Bart grabbed a barrel and threw it, just chucked it, through the air. It looked like it landed near the castle. He then swung his giant arm straight at the carriage.
"Dodge it, quick!"

The carriage was toast, but the three of them successfully dodged. Sora powered up his armor to maximum power, and the trolls flexed their muscles. Sora charged forward and tried throwing a blow to its knee. The punch rebounded off it like hitting a rock wall.

"What is this thing made of?"

"Well..." Steve replied, "He used to be a normal troll like any of us, but he got hit with some nasty curse magic when he drank out of the forbidden well."

"He knew he wasn't allowed to do that."

"We told him several times, but he did it anyway, and now he's like this."

"W-well, does he have any weak points?"

"I would think his noggin would still be a vulnerable spot."

"It usually is for the rest of us."

Sora didn't have enough faith in his jumping ability, even with the boost from his reinforcement magic, he hadn't been practicing jumping, so his accuracy could be way off.

"Can you guys throw me up there?"

"Sure, mister...uh, what's your name?"

"Sora, Sora Ganji."

"Okay, mister Ganji."

The two of them held Sora, crouched and ready to leap.

"Okay, now!"

They tossed him with all their might, sending him much higher than the top of Bart's head.

Sora was unsteady at first, but soon stabilized. He aimed for Bart's head and threw a strong punch.

But Bart wasn't just standing around motionless, he saw Sora coming and swatted at him, smacking him into the side of a building. Thankfully, due to his reinforcement, he was mostly uninjured.

"Sora!" Ginko shouted.

"Ngh, I'm fine."

He got up out of the wreckage and stared at his imposing foe.

"I guess it's final boss time."

He decided to risk jumping, since he was at a slightly better angle. He angled himself and jumped, using the boost from his magic to get him there.

This time he was headed straight for Bart's head.

He dived head first, both fists together, but Bart had other plans. As Sora flew towards him, he grabbed an iron post sticking out of the ground beside him, and swung it at Sora with incredible velocity.

Sora braced for the impact, but it never came.

He quickly opened his eyes to see a small, silver-haired person, guarding him with a disc-like barrier.

"Don't worry Sora! I've got it!"

Sora started to smile, but was interrupted as the barrier shattered, and Ginko took the full force of the blow, also grazing Sora and knocking him to the ground.

"Ngh..."

Sora got up as quickly as he could and looked around for Ginko.

He noticed her a few yards away, motionless.

He ran over to Ginko and held her in his arms.

"Ginko! Speak to me!"

She opened her eyes and said in a weak voice.

"H-heh, you f-finally called me by my name..."

A tear fell from her eye as she passed out.

Sam and Steve came over to check on them.

"Is miss fairy alright?"

"Mister Sora?"

Sora stood up, his face streaming tears and twisted in some kind of rage.

His armor began to glow a deep red as he turned to face the monster that hurt his beloved.

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