

Not a good week.

Agatha Valliere was not having a good week.

Within the span of a few days she had nearly lost everything. Her family's noble castle has been completely overtaken by revolting peasants that were gaslit by their neighboring noble 'allies'. Her father had already fallen into sickness but having him backstabbed by almost every existing friend was another nail to the coffin. A tearful farewell couldn't even be done as she had chosen to escape, at the beckoning of her adviser Morgan. The entire civil unrest would not be quelled by a warrior even of her caliber. She might be a genius with the blade but she had yet to reach anything close to a proper ruler's leadership.

She probably shouldn't have skipped all those lessons in lieu of exploring the city or trying to reach dungeons.

But the point is, Agatha's lineage is being hunted down. Criminals, traitors, mercenaries, desperate peasants all yearned for someone to blame and the nobles who led the region of Freulia were the perfect scapegoats. She did not know how many of the royal family were alive, but she was doubtful that her lesser siblings would still be around. It took her swordsmanship and expertise on escaping to even leave the capital. Furthermore all the teachings from her teachers to understand how to survive outside. Sleepless days weakened her and led to a level where she can barely just escape, and sometimes defeat, various bandits and wild creatures.

All that pushed Agatha to keep going was Morgan's word to track down an individual who can help her. A friend who had moved to the most distant and most remote village ever created in Freulia. It was frustrating to reach but at least now she was so close to her goal. She was thankful to be stepping on stone pavement rather than the muddy trails or cold caverns that she had frequented. Even the unfriendly indifferent gazes of the passing citizen was welcomed over the bloodlusty orcs or the greedy gazes of bandits.

"There... there it is,"

A tavern.

A tavern that didn't look too different from any other. The title above was the only distinguishing feature, being '**Crowe's Den**' in a difficult to see design. Actually if she wasn't told what the name of the place was she might've passed it completely. But maybe that was the key to it. There was no better way to hide a leaf than to leave it in a forest after all. Maybe this person was smarter than she thought?

"No point waiting here in that case,"

Agatha stepped in, her worn down shoes scattering mud and causing her to curse. It wouldn't do to mess up someone's establishment like that especially if it's someone who would be her savior. But concerns about that died down immediately at the realization of how empty the place was. Not a single customer was inside and all the tables around seemed unused and dusty. Her clearly suspicious disguise was unnecessary at this point. Then a voice spoke from a counter up ahead.

"Welcome customer~!" It was a figure of a short woman who casually waved with energy, green eyes piercing into Agatha's blue. Raven locks styled to look beautiful alongside with a simple cozy black dress more befitting of a middle class noble. Although Agatha had to look down to see her properly, since she was much shorter than expected. Was she not a dwarf or a halfling? Morgan specifically said that the person she was looking for was a human. But who else could this be rather than the one she sought? "Please come in~Come in-- oh my. That's quite the dirty gear on you. No doubt you are in need of rest~!"

It was true.

The clothing she had worn has been caked with so much mud and dirt that it persisted in an almost intriguing design. Maybe one can joke that it's an actual fashion from another region. Nevertheless it was what she kept that allowed her to survive this far. A mere tunic and some blouse was more than enough to hide her frame. She could pass as a man since her mother did not bless her with a bountiful frame. Agatha didn't mind being flat chested though. She was a very capable swordswoman this way and her attire made it easier to pretend as long as she didn't lower her hood.

Which Agatha did now as there was no more need for it. This was the person she's looking for. The moment she lowered her hood, her gold locks cascaded down to her neck. It wasn't that long, as she had always cut it to keep them useful for skirmishes. It made it less likely for someone to pull her hair. With them being dirtied, it even made it easier to pretend to be someone. But the tavern keeper's eyes showed recognition rather than confusion. Damn. She's still too recognizable.

"My oh my! Princess Agatha?"

"Indeed, but please lower your voice!" In a rushed manner Agatha spoke, glancing back as she shut the doorway. There was no one following her but she preferred to play it safe. Her many tutors and her personal knight drilled that with every lesson. "I'm in quite a predicament right now... and I desperately need help. Is your name Lily Crowe?"

An immediate nod. A cautious but intrigued grin befell the tavernkeeper's face. A very good sign for sure.

"So I assume Morgan sent you here? Oh that rascal,"

“Y-yes, so you know of her!” Hope. All this time of running by herself. Days of not getting aid from anyone. Finally someone that may be able to provide the sanctuary she so needed. It can’t be helped that she rushed to her and grabbed her hands. “Can you help me?? She told me that you can aid me!”

“Hmhm. I mean she really is desperate if she sent you to me of all people,” A heavy sigh escaped Lily’s lips. Not even fazed by how strongly Agatha gripped her hands. Even when her gaze fell towards the numerous scars and callousness of her fingers made her flinch.

“Desperation is expected when your entire family is being purged alongside all we know and hold dear!” Agatha nearly shouted, frustration becoming visible. “I’m not saying this with the intent to command you. You will surely be repaid for your services! All the fame, money, or whatever I can guarantee!”

“Sure.”

“I know it might be too much to ask for but even-... ah?”

“Yeah, I feel like it’ll be nice if Morgan owes me a favor anyway,” Lily said casually, nodding a bit. “So why not?”

This.

This was smoother than expected.

“You really mean it?”

It was going so well!

“Yup. I don’t really care for politics as long as no one messes with my Tavern,” Lily stated simply. Agatha couldn’t help but grin and sigh in relief. “In that case what can I do for you? Morgan must’ve told you I dabble a bit in magic like her, correct?”

“Y-yes!!!”

“Alrighty then. So since the common masses want you dead it would be bad if your identity gets leaked... I’ll come up with a disguise for you, just go sit over there or something.”

“Wonderful! Thank you!”

Agatha felt energy return to her once more as she seated herself on one of the many tables. This was comparable to the novels that she read, about how a runaway princess would be able to escape certain death and find refuge in the hands of a prince or kind folk that would protect

her. This sanctuary might be a bit questionable but at least an actual sorceress aiding her would do. Maybe if she could find her sisters then this would go even better. Her planning on what to do next took a pause as Lily arrived with some sort of strange doll on one hand and a large heavy tome on the other. If anything it looked like a plushie. Actually, the sight of Lily approaching that way almost made her think of her adorable sister whenever she had a nightmare.

“Kay~! Runaway Princess, needs to be protected, disguise, yadda yadda,” Lily sat on the other end of the table, having to look up at her. “I’m going to have to use some Fay Magic here to abide by the rules. May I have your name?”

“Fay magic?” Caution. Morgan always warned her about such magic and to never trust a Fay.

“Controlled Fay Magic,” Lily corrected. “The **Princess Agatha Valliere** is being hunted down. Thus, for you to maintain a perfect disguise you must give up your name.”

“I-I see... Will I get it back?”

“Likely. I won’t return it till it’s safe for you to go around though,” Lily assured her with a determined look. It was a calm that eased her mind. The face of a liar or someone clueless was completely different. So no doubt this short sorceress aimed to help her fully. “May I have your name then?”

“I understand. Yes, my name is **Agatha Valliere. The Princess of Freulia.**”

The plush doll shone a bit as if it was burning with flames yet without a single cinder. A passing breeze moved by and the Princess shivered from the sudden coldness. Then it was gone. The Princess blinked. Was this the Fay magic that Lily was talking about? It left her very uncomfortable but it was also... very lackluster.

“Kay~! Alright. From now on, you’re Theulia,” Lily stated. Her tone was almost commanding. But err... Theulia wasn’t really sure you can be commanding when you tell someone that their name is what it is. “You can’t really be the Princess anymore, so I’ll be making you work here as my barkeep. Alright?”

“Err, are you sure that would work?” Theulia glanced at her again. Aside from that strange weirdness it felt like nothing had changed.

She looked back at her hands. Still covered in scars and wounds, no doubt from practicing her sword.

Clothes still dirty from all the mess those days spent in the woods.

Her name is still Theulia, the Princess of Freulia.

Lily wasn't scamming her, is she?

"? What do you mean?" Lily tilted her head in confusion, giving a scrutinizing gaze. "I'm a genius so you better not doubt me!"

"I---" Those were not good words to hear. Was Lily truly the witch she proclaimed herself to be? "I can't help but be suspicious nowadays with how things are around me."

Theulia was about to say more, till she realized it.

"Well! Nevermind! What's more important is my disguise!" Theulia pointed at herself as she stood over. Her height easily made it obvious that she towered over Lily. She was a taller woman than most so it didn't do too well to hide her identity. "Do you have any way to hide my form?"

"Hmm... Alright fine I do. Barkeep clothes and all,"

"Then that'll do!"

"Buuuut I don't leave things half-assed. So let me just bippity boppity boo, there!"

There was another hum and flash. The gale was stronger than before too. It was enough to cause her skirt to flap up, forcing Theulia to grab its hems and hold it down. It definitely lasted longer and by the time it finished Theulia's eyes opened to seeing Lily looking pleased with herself with a big bright smile.

"... That's it?"

The smile turned to a frown.

"What do you mean???" Lily demanded, almost offended.

Theulia was the one that should be offended. She looked down at herself. Well. At least her outfit was clean but it was the same as before. Her shoes were still the same and no longer dipped in a layer of mud. It would be difficult to move in those high heels otherwise. The stockings she wore weren't ripped to near nothing anymore so that was a plus. Her skirt reached past her knees so it was conservative enough. Her blouse had a cleavage window but it's not like she had anything to show for it. Theulia paused, tugging at the sleeves of her outfit. There was that strong feeling of discomfort again, but was that more from the cleaning of her clothes? Or was it from the use of Fay magic in general?

"I look the same," Theulia pointed out, even tugging at the apron she wore. "I mean you cleaned it all up so thanks for that. But I don't think that's much."

“What- did I really??” Lily paused, looking over her tome. Then she looked at the plush doll. Huh. Did it always have that outfit? It was wearing some garb that would be befitting of an adventurer. “Hm. Maybe I should’ve just been more practical. These reality warping spells either work or don’t work.”

“Reality warping?”

“Don’t think too much about it! It’s just a really good transmutation spell basically,”

Theulia wondered if she might get turned to a gold statue if this witch doesn’t prove her capability soon.

“Well a name and attire is easy to fix,” Theulia noted, sighing as she sat down again. Even when sitting down she loomed over her. “Alright. What about this at least? Can you make me look like I’m not the Princess?”

Theulia tugged at her blouse a bit, revealing the scars by her chest and hips. In particular one large one almost close to her heart. There were some particular gashes from some nasty fights in the tournament. But she proved her worth by winning in those fights. Then there were the few times assassins made an attempt for her life, with the closest almost piercing her heart if not for a timely reaction of hers. At the same time, almost everyone knew to expect such a wound there. If someone were to see then it would be a giveaway.

“Oh! I can!” Lily nodded, clapping her hands. “I’ll make sure they don’t recognize you at all!”

“Perfect!...”

Theulia stared back.

Something was wrong. Wait, maybe she should clarify.

“Oh-Lily- you know I’m talking about the scars right?”

But she had already cast the spell. There was another powerful gale, and Theulia flinched, before looking at her ‘savior. The witch blinked, before turning towards the runaway Princess again.

“Sorry, what?”

“I meant my scars,” Theulia clarified, pointing once more at her chest. “Oh-give me a moment.”

Theulia turned downwards and started to pull at her blouse, pulling them open. It was always a pain to do this with how restrictive her clothing is. Her breasts had massively outgrown her

mother's by a mile but despite all odds she was a phenomenal swordswoman. In fact it was almost comical how some of her opponents never aimed there or are completely distracted. It was annoying, but she had to capitalize on it to win. So she raised it again, once more exposing the wound that was underneath her untouched breast.

"Ohhhh, well I can just fix that with a healing spell," Lily said offhandedly, already humming as she prepared it. This one sounded less like the ominous magic she had been rapidly uncomfortable about. "But how did you get that wound?"

"Assassin attempted to stab me in the heart," Theulia stated, though marveling as she noticed the marks disappear. "But thankfully my reflexes allowed me to prevent him from killing me."

Theulia decided to hide the details about her assassin, ending up almost hypnotized when he attempted to stab her. Really was he even aiming to strike her heart or did he just want a better view?

Nevertheless, this one was convenient. By the time the scars were gone, it was perfect. Theulia was impressed! Maybe this witch was more of a cleric? But why did her back ache so much? Her center was a bit off and it almost felt like she's not used to this. Was the removal of scars that odd? Not to mention the chair she was on felt a bit different. Was it smaller? Theulia glanced back down.

"... Lily. I think you messed up something."

"Ah? What's wrong this time? You keep doubting me!"

"I think you..."

There was no doubt about it this time.

Theulia's sense of discomfort was at an all time high. The scars were gone but there was something else. Her soft delicate hand reached for her hip, feeling the enlarged state of it. It was wider compared to the chair. She was sure that she didn't have to struggle to stay properly seated. Slowly she stood up, wincing as she felt her hip bump the table. Lily looked concerned at her sudden silence as the Ex-Princess reached for another chair.

"You shrunk the chairs here,"

"Shrunk them?"

"Yes. It seems like you ended up hitting it by mistake," Theulia stated annoyedly as she sat down again, this time relieved. Two chairs housed her derriere now. They had shrunk so much that it was impossible for her to sit down on one. As a temporary fix, each ass cheek now laid on one chair each. It wasn't a harmful situation but magic was dangerous after all.

"Hmm... my mistake I suppose. I'll fix that later..."

"You better since it won't be comfy for me," Theulia stated, still unnerved. Even with that remedy, as she wiggled herself onto a comfy state, she glanced back at the rest of her. Her body was clearly what it was since she arrived here. The only difference was the removal of her scars. It was a bit strange to see something unique to her disappear but it was a necessity to survive. It at least guaranteed that the witch was effective.

"I'm sitting just fine, I don't know about you!" Lily stated proudly, and once more she raised the plush doll and tome. "Anyway. Got any other requests?"

"Let's see... How about my hair."

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More and more changed kept coming.

But the two of them were never satisfied. Each one had a small chance of succeeding to the obvious awareness of either. It felt like Lily didn't know what she was doing or Theulia was just being a nag. Honestly it was very wrong. Even when nothing happened it felt very wrong. The disguised princess was irritated.

"What is it now?" Lily demanded, looking more worn.

"I don't know," Theulia whispered, almost worryingly.

Theulia tapped her fingers on the table. Manicured fingers glistened, vibrantly pink. She hadn't bit into them. It was a bad habit. But the discomfort since she started was there. What was it? Nothing was out of place and Lily had been nothing but kind to her. Well, sure she started off an argument about keeping childhood promises and contracts with familiars but Theulia chalked it up to eccentricities of mages. Morgan did warn her she was a strange one.

Yet, what was it???

She glanced down. Her breasts completely blotted the view below. What was she thinking? Wasn't she used to that already? Theulia twirled her hair. Her hair drills were hard to maintain but through hard work and miracle like effort she managed to keep them like that the entire time. It was almost an impossibility for them to ever be dirtied. Was it that? No. That wasn't the source of her discomfort. She pouted, her full luscious lips parting a bit as she considered what to ask. Lily had been poking fun at how breathy she was and telling her not to seduce her. Strange girl. Why would a princess seduce some sorceress anyway? Not to mention the more she stayed, the less it felt like she was competent.

"Theuliaaaaaa,"

She snapped from her daze.

"Wow. That was a long one. I swear you're ditzier than we started,"

"Don't be rude," Theulia started with a glare. A commanding and fierce expression. She may be a runaway princess but she still had her pride! "I'm the same as when we started. Just distracted!"

"Distracted by all the lies you keep saying?" Lily asked with a raised brow.

"Your changes don't typically succeed. The chances of it working are 50/50... Maybe even less,"

"Hey! My magic's working just fine you damn bimbo!!"

Even when agitated, Lily's magic was a hit or miss. All the imposing shaking of the building or the bright flashes were meaningless when they did nothing. Theulia sighed in disappointment. Maybe that's why Morgan sent her here. It was like a totally last ditch plan to even do anything... Wait. What did she just think? Ugh. It felt like a massive weight piled up on top of her head. The source of her headache was clearly Lily but there was also something more. Still, what else was she to rely on but her right now?

"I'm like not a bimbo!" Theulia stated firmly, but almost breathily. "I'm a princess trained by the very best warriors and academic professors!"

"Haaah," Lily rolled her eyes. Really!! Theulia was sure that this woman was more like a child than an adult! The plush was still glowing as she threw back an insult. "They trained you with the best of the best and what they came out with is some guy magnet. Really, do you even know how to use a sword or read? I bet you're distracted all the time by stupid stuff!"

"...." Theulia fumed.

This. Freaking. Brat. Pissed. Her. Off. So. Much!

So what if she couldn't read a signpost!? She had her most devoted servant to do that for her!

So what if whenever she used a blade it went flying!? It's a new style of combat!

It wasn't her fault all the teachers she had were sexy hunks or cute gals! It was their fault for falling in love with her too soon!

No.

She had to focus. This was distracting. She had a mission. She needed to be completely unrecognizable. Theulia tried to come up with a warm smile, pushing her chest up. If she tried she could probably knock over Lily off the chair with that alone. But focus. Let's not be petty. A deep breathe, as she tried to recollect her thoughts. The source of discomfort is there, but it felt like she might have an idea of where it might be.

"Lily... I'm sorry if I'm like mad at you for a few times. Totes--- EHEM!! That's, really not nice of me for someone who's helping me out," Theulia continued, forcing herself. Again there was that strange feeling of wrongness. "But--- the more I do this. The more I feel as if I'm becoming different."

Theulia paused, looking herself over. The gaudy jewelry on her hands. The fancy necklaces. They felt wrong but she knew they had always wore them all this time. It was that but magnified. So the more she considered it, the more likely that it was the cause. Theulia looked at Lily once more.

"Lily. Is the magic you're using... does it have side effects of perhaps, making my body alien to me?"

It took a lot of effort to not say 'like' or something that felt natural to her.

Lily paused, musing.

Then she gazed at her tome.

Then at her plush doll.

It looked like a princess warrior. It even had a sword and an elegant look. It was something she would've considered disguising herself as, yet they haven't. It was a badass tomboy princess warrior.

Then Lily clapped her hands, cutting off a question related to it.

"!!! I got it!! Reality Warping Magic wasn't perfect enough! I didn't make it natural for you!"

"You didn't??"

"Yup!! I get it now!" Lily grinned as she started to cast once more, but this time gesturing for Theulia to get closer. "The changes must've been unnatural for you. In that case I think I intruded on your mind and altered it so that **it was always the case for you!** I was too good at my magic! I even changed my own perception!"

"O-oh that's wonderful!! Like nice!!" Theulia blinked. She had to stop doing that. "So in that case, you can fix it right? To make me know what was actually my true form?"

“Yup!” Lily nodded excitedly. “I’ll make sure that this form of yours is different from the true you!! So this is it! The perfect disguise!”

Theulia smiled in relief.

Finally. It looks like she laid her trust in a good person after all....

“Okay dokay~ I knew you like could handle it!”

“I know right~! Anyway! This spell will completely cut your identity off from the royal family.”

“Like yeah~... Wait. What-”

The poof was instant this time.

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Lily was relieved.

She finally had a new staff member to help out and people were coming in here by the droves.

To be honest, she wasn’t even sure why she was so busy. She was sure she was helping Theulia with a situation. Something about a Princess disguise? Err. It was an odd request, but either way it worked out. Or at least it seemed like it did. Theulia seemed content and it wasn’t as if she’s in any trouble at all.

There was the whole weirdness about people coming in rudely interrupting everyone about Princess Agatha’s location. Something about “noble family” and all that. Didn’t Morgan work for the Royalty? Yeah, she probably did. Actually, wasn’t Theulia speaking about Morgan sending her here? No, that wouldn’t make sense. Morgan hated voluptuous eye candies who attract the attention of anyone. No doubt it’s because Morgan was jealous of them.

“Boss I’m like all done!”

“Thanks Theulia, take a break!”

There she was. Her staff member. Surprisingly Theulia had amazing reflexes and a near infinite stamina. She was probably the best worker she ever had. Well, she was the only one. But then again she attracted the attention of every customer here. Each one casting lecherous gazes at her and even attempting to cop a feel when they could. Both men and women. They were firmly disciplined by a swift thwack of her broom if Theulia didn’t slap their hands away. Somehow Theulia was just that good at seducing them no doubt~ Usually Lily wouldn’t mind being the one to do this, but it was a nice change of pace.

Besides, she wanted to practice a bit more in reality warping magic.

It never felt like she could make it work...