

To Carve a Path

Gerard Renaul let out a gasp as Fiora's rapier pierced his heart. She pulled it swiftly free, flicking blood off the blade. His eyes were already clouding as he crumpled to the ground.

He didn't have to die, she told herself; it was his choice. House Renaul may have been offended, but she had done all in her power to ease the blows as they came. She wiped her blade tiredly with a rag.

As the Master of House Laurent, she was growing in notoriety amongst the other houses. There was a mold that she was expected to fill, and people were having a difficult time grasping the fact that she didn't give a damn.

A tough-looking attendant stepped quietly behind her and stood, waiting.

"What now?" She said, sheathing her blade.

He did not take kindly to her tone. "You have slain the heir of House Renaul." He began angrily. "If you're done robbing Demacia of its future, there is a member of the Crownguard awaiting you in the courtyard." He spun on his heel and marched away without another word.

Fiora scoffed mentally. 'Robbing Demacia of its future.' If that contemptible peasant of a man was Demacia's future, she wanted no part in it. She held her tongue as the man left. He was not worth her time.

The Crownguard however... She had not had opportunity to meet one of them in person. In her youth she had dreamed of joining the Crownguard and representing the might of Demacia in glorious battle. Now, she suspected them to be little more than political pawns of the Demacian 'nobility.' Perhaps she was wrong, but life experience had long since bound her mind in chains of cynicism.

She adjusted her sword belt and began the short walk to the courtyard. Her leather heels clicked on the marble floors, here and there drawing the gaze of servants and nobility. Those who saw her often made no attempt to conceal their contempt. She walked proudly despite them. Let them challenge her if they felt it necessary. House Laurent would ascend as one of the great houses of Demacia, even if she had to carve a path through these sniveling politicians herself.

She rounded a stone pillar and stepped into the courtyard to see a muscular figure in formal military dress. As he turned to face her she recognized Garen – the fabled 'Might of Demacia.' He offered her a civilian salute.

"Master Laurent," he said with a slight smile. "I'm glad you could meet me; I have a proposition for you."

Fiora studied his expression warily. There was no trace of sarcasm or contempt – it was refreshing, but she did not allow herself to relax.

"How may I be of service to the Crownguard?" She said cautiously.

"It is not the Crownguard, but all of Demacia that needs your help." He said, utterly serious. "I heard about your duel this morning with Gerard Renaul."

Fiora stared at him, stone-faced.

“And Master Dreveaux last week.” He continued.

Fiora stared, her impatience growing.

“House Sadeus, House Lumour, Frelmear, Rotanue, Cremon...” Garen began counting on his fingers.

“Yes, yes, what of them?” Fiora interrupted testily.

“You are indeed thinning the numbers of Demacian nobles as they say.” Garen said simply. “I understand most of them were your suitors?”

“Most of them were pigs and peasants.” Fiora spat. “I have no interest in suitors, and they would rather die than face rejection.”

“That brings me to my proposal -” Garen began.

“I said I have no interest in suitors.” Fiora said, annoyed.

“Not that kind of proposal.” Garen laughed a hearty, genuine laugh. “You are perhaps unaware that the Crownguard do not marry?”

Fiora crossed her arms impatiently. “I was not.”

“How would you like to join them?”

Fiora froze. This was unexpected. “Join the Crownguard?”

“Fredlund Sadeus was one of the best swordsmen I have ever known.” Garen said. “It is my understanding that your duel with him lasted for roughly 30 seconds.”

Fiora nodded, in a daze.

Garen continued. “As a member of the Crownguard, you would be free of any obligation to marry, and Demacian nobles will stop spending their wealth on weekly funerals. You will also,” He caught her eye. “Be tasked with the defense of the crown of Demacia.”

Despite herself, a panorama of childhood dreams was dancing across Fiora’s mind. She shook them clear and considered her options with cold logic. It only took a moment.

“I’ll do it.” She said.

“Straight to the point!” Garen laughed again. “Your reputation precedes you! I will look forward to your presence in the barracks tomorrow morning.” He shook her hand and left her there, standing with a stupid grin.

She was to be a Crownguard. No more insufferable suitors. No more doubt in her ability. House Laurent would be purged of the filth of her father’s scandal. She would finally train with warriors worthy of her time. She would receive a warrior’s salute, rather than a civilian.

At long last, she had indeed carved a path to her own destiny.