

To Serve Noxus

The sound of flesh on stone reverberated for only a moment before fading into the night, but in Talon's ears it echoed like cannon fire in the alleyway.

He'd been sloppy this time. With that much noise, he was pressed for time. Only one person remained alive: an auburn-haired noblewoman, one he recognized.

"Lady Delilah Carthage. Fourth in line to be head of your house, with two more behind you. Killing you will upset your father, but not Noxus' shipping." He pressed his still-bloody wrist blade against the woman's neck. "I think we've established who is in control here."

She started to nod, but the cold of steel against her neck was proving enough incentive to keep still.

She blinked twice, realization creeping into her eyes. "Wait... a split cape, with knives on the ends... Talon?"

Oh, she recognized him. Unexpected, but not bad. She would know better than to screw with him.

She grinned wide. "Oh, I see now. Lord DeCouteau's little pet street rat has come to play."

Or perhaps not. Talon's wrist blade pressed against her cheek, his expression unchanging. "Not a fan of your lip. Perhaps I should slice it off."

She went very still. Good, she could learn. A rare sight among nobles, even Noxian ones. "What do you want to know?" She gulped.

"Cassiopeia DeCouteau should have returned by now." Talon growled. Delilah said nothing, so he continued. "You will tell me where she went."

Delilah blinked twice, genuine confusion on her face. "... don't you know? You work for her house."

Talon's blade pressed down just enough to draw blood. This time, Delilah ignored it.

"... You don't." She glanced behind Talon, and a sly grin crossed her face.

Talon said nothing. Cassiopeia had left without telling him or anyone where she was going. He already knew that she had chartered one of House Carthage's ships, heading south towards-

"Shurima."

"I know *that*." Talon snapped. "What *part* of Shurima?"

"Some servant you are." Delilah's grin grew wider. "Explain something to me. If you don't know where she is what makes you so sure she's alive? Why even look for her like this, and make an enemy of my house?"

"The name of the city. And where she went after that, if you know."

"Weakling. No true Noxian would ever waste his time on a lost cau-"

Talon's arms moved as one, too quickly for the eye to track. Shurikens slashed open the necks of the two men sneaking up behind him, and they fell hard onto the stone. Delilah's throat spilled her blood across Noxus Prime's cobblestones, and she fell to her knees. Pure shock was plastered on her face as she coughed, looking up at him.

"Their attempts at stealth offended my ears." Talon growled, voice cold as ice. "You're avoiding the question because you don't know the answer either. This is a waste of my time."

With that, the assassin was gone. Lady Delilah Carthage exhaled her last, and blood flowed through the street.

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Talon stayed perched on Noxus' rooftops, contemplating Delilah's words.

Why even look for her?

... It was a good question, one he had come back to often over the last month.

He had been trying to find Cassiopeia's trail for about a month now. General DeCouteau's trail had long since grown cold, but he had searched for the man until he realized Cassiopeia was missing. Then he'd searched for her, too.

Most Noxians in his position would have simply abandoned

Demacian propaganda aside, Noxians were known for their brutal individualism and personal strength. No one cared who you were, what you were or where you'd come from: if you were strong, you were welcome. Talon was strong, and so he could do as he pleased. The downside to this idea was that the weak thought themselves strong *because* they lived in Noxus.

Like Delilah.

Talon remembered what it was like to be like her: a man solely concerned with what he wanted, as Noxians often were. He'd been a street urchin, no more than a rat with a knife. That rat had bitten and clawed more than a few "Noxians" that dared try his luck against him, and taken every last scrap of gold or food he wanted. With every fight, Talon had grown more and more bored. Not even the Noxians sent to "recruit" him had been able to match his blade.

Then Talon had met a man that had managed to best him in every way at his own game. DeCouteau had matched him blow for blow, blade to blade, always just a bit too fast for a young Talon. Never before had he fought someone so skilled, someone who could get his very blood pumping. And yet, even then, Talon could tell the general was holding back. DeCouteau could have ended him, and yet he wanted only to recruit him.

Sure, Cassiopeia had probably died in Shurima and this search would never yield fruit. But the lord of his house had been very adamant:

“Serve my girls, and you serve my house,” DeCouteau had said, “Serve my house, and you serve me.”

Talon leapt into the air. He landed on the next building, making his way along the roofs of Noxus Prime.

What people like Lady Carthage missed were that there were many ways to be strong. She had called him a pet, but a pet grows weak, selfish and indolent. Much like her. He was no pet, he was a servant. A servant toils to aid another, and in so doing, becomes stronger. As a Noxian should.

“Serve my house, and you serve me.”

He searched for DeCouteau – both the Lady and the General – because there was only one man he would ever call ‘master’.