

Under The Oak Tree

Under the Oak Tree, Chapter 10 – Damsel in Distress (2)

“I know! Put the shield around the carriage, now!”

After giving orders to someone, he looked back at her and cried sharply.

“Never come out of the carriage!”

Then, he roughly closed the carriage door without waiting her answer. At that same moment, a deafening roar shook the earth...

Maximillian covered her ears in defense to the monstrous sound. Every time the earth shook, the carriage wobbled under her feet.

In a terrible shock and fear, she crouched to the floor and didn't dare look out the window. Recently, she heard vaguely that there were frequent sightings of monsters near her home, but it's been less than an hour since she left her father's castle. She closed her eyes tightly, her whole body trembling terribly.

“Make it stop!”

She swallowed a sob. The carriage shook violently at the end of someone's cry. Then came the roars of beasts and shouts of knights which almost sounded inhumane and barbaric to her ears. Overwhelmed by the sudden shift in events, she buried her face deep in her bulbous skirt.

Around her, continuous dull sounds that seemed to collide with something resonated. ‘What could that be?’ Hesitantly, she raised her head slowly in fear that of hitting carriage ceiling and was greeted with a sight that would surely haunt her for life—huge, bloodshot, green eyes were staring at her from the window.

In reflex, she screamed and stood close to the other side. But it was too late...

Her small body flipped in the air, her world turning upside down as the carriage lost its balance. She screamed at the top of her lungs and tried to reach the opposite carriage wall where the door was located... but just couldn't.

Then, the vehicle jolted to the opposite direction and Max was flung towards the now wide-open door. And in no time, she found herself kissing the ground; the rocks digging in her skin.

In the face of danger, Max became ghastly pale, thoroughly shaken of being out of her safe haven. With little strength she could muster, she scrambled back up to the carriage, but her legs seemed to not work—her body, overwhelmed by the turn of events, became weak and numb.

She looked around for help. But everyone was busy fighting the gray giants.

Eventually, she crawled on her knees and tried to climb up the carriage on her own. As she did so, one ogre caught sight of her and started creeping nearer the damsel in distress.

Heavy foot thumping became louder and clearer... Upon realization, Max screamed out loud, her throat hurt. This scream added fuel to the fire as the giant started advancing faster.

Before the monster could reach her, a flash of light flashed across her eyes and the giant's body fell to the ground in a loud, earth-shattering thud.

””” ”

“Madam! Get inside now! There's a shield here where it's safe!” She looked back abruptly on her shoulder and saw a man of slender build, calling her attention.

“This is an ogre from the mountain. Don't worry, nothing wrong will happen to Lord Calypse. Stay inside!”

“Oh, I, I... I didn't mean to come out...”

Max groaned out in panic. Riftan's order to not to come out of the carriage echoed in her mind. She didn't mean to disturb the men at all.

“Madam! Go inside! Please!” The man broke off to his gibberish. She wanted to tell him what happened but, it was not the time to be making excuses. Instead, she willed herself to climb up the carriage with a wobbly gait—when she heard another thud.

Unconsciously turning her head to the source of sound, Max saw blood sprouting from the gushing cut at the giant's upper body which spurted blood like a fountain. Her stomach, which had been strained for the past few days, twisted painfully.

She tried to hold back the bile rising up her throat but to no avail, she ended up emptying her stomach to the ground unabashedly. The enormity of the sight she had just seen making her vomit on the very spot she stood.

“Madam Calypse!”

The man shouted in surprise. She clawed at her neck desperately; her eyes welling up tears in pain.

“Are you all right?”

Gasping for breath, she tried to find comfort at the touch on her back, but the nausea that started once was hard to stop.

“What’s going on?” A familiar voice reached her ears.

Max raised her head at the startled voice of Riftan. He stood by the giant’s body, looking at her worriedly.

Instinctively, Max crept backwards, the bloodied appearance of her husband frightening her. As he strode closer, dark red spots of blood taints the ground his feet touches. The sharp sword which shone blue was now scarlet red, and the silver-white armor became ink dark with thick, black blood of the giant all over it.

He looked as horrible as a lion in hell. Max backed off, lost her balance and stumbled towards the carriage wall. In her sight, his figure shook like a hazy dream and soon became strangely distorted. She felt dizzy.

Slowly, everything was devoured by darkness, and the sounds surrounding her faded away.

And before she knew it, she sank deep into unconsciousness.

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