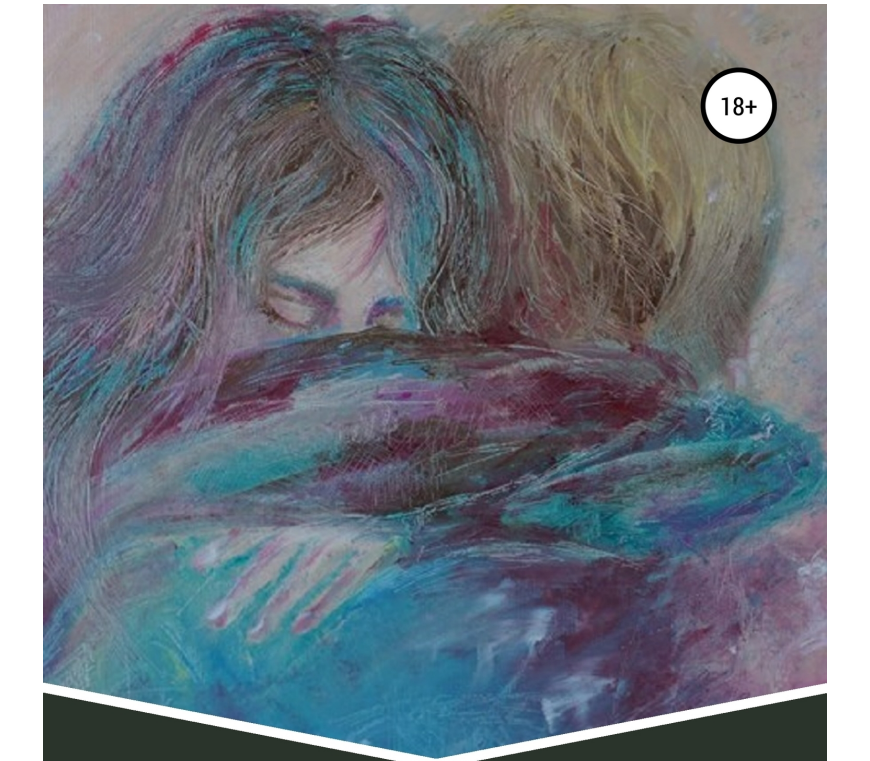




18+

Anna Pazii

Book One: «Selection: Choice or Destiny»

Cycle: Land of the Dragon

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Cycle: Land of the
Dragon. Selection: Choice
or Destiny. Book One

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Аннотация

Katrin accidentally goes to the bride selection. He has no magic, does not know about the world he is in, but must reach the finale or be killed. Selection without standard competitions and stringent requirements. Translation from Russian language. The cover is a painting of Valentina Pazii.

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Chapter 1. Scary

I'm wearing a gorgeous red-coloured dress, with a deep cleavage, and my hair is pulled up in high hair. Thirteen gorgeous girls lined up in a semicircle in a glade. But the panic and the fear seem to have taken hold only of me, the skin is crawling, the teeth are tapping, the back is straight. One thing's good, we're just going to have a visual.

The Crown Prince of the Draconian Lands of Drakhodar evaluates us.

It looks creepy: wings (and he periodically spreads them) in a range of at least five meters, head (though scary to the cowardice) thank God one, the size of a quarter of me

Wait, wait, wait, it's sniffing me out

So ... Away ...

He's got a paw of four numbers in a total animated two-story-size movie

And this monster chooses wife among us... will choose from those who are in a clearing... As I drifted into a happy sample? Let me tell you.

Chapter 2. Three weeks before the bride field

So, there was a girl named Catherine. Tired at work, swearing to her colleagues, crying out for unhappy love, dreaming of a slightly higher salary and a new car. And then one day, there was a holiday: two weeks of the sea, sunshine and a truce with my colleagues. My friends suggested to check out a local legend: to go to the stone gate under a full moon in the local mountains, to say «I am coming to you from the people of the world to the world of two-faced,» then a miracle happens...

And the miracle happened, I was in a different world. But alone. I didn't find any friends around

You don't think, I didn't realize the reality of what was happening right away. At first I thought they were such a bad joke. After passed under the arch I thought «Here are the jokers, and when have managed to hide ». However, after 3 hours of searching the joke stopped to seem funny. At dawn I realized I was lost, and when I saw the dragon floating in the sky, the first thought was, On the other hand, you don't have to pay for it anymore»

Chapter 3. And in the new world there are people

I was confused for a while. You never know what imagined, especially after a sleepless night. I really wanted a warm bed, hot tea and pancakes. Whatever flies over your head, the first thing I have to do is find a house and locals, and find out how to get back home/

The place was strangely found. At the foot stood a small light house, in it appeared a friendly mistress, who opened the door for exhausted me, drunk some sort of herbal decoction and allowed to rest in the garden. It had a bed that looked like a hammock, only with a soft mattress and a warm blanket, (and you thought I was about to get a room ready, meet like a princess...? They haven't kicked me out yet! After a night of wandering, I was a bit in the mud, slightly scratched, bruises under the eyes (hungry, cold and sleepless.) In general, they let me take a shower, take a break, and then ask questions later.

Chapter 4. A little clearer and a little scarier

I woke up in a wonderful mood, in the street the sun is bright (noon seems to), the smell of the divine lunch . After all, I wanted to know how to get home.

Elenelika (such a complicated name was at my hospitable mistress) has faded me lunch, the dress has given out (in exchange for my dirty clothes), but the name of the city «Sochi» was not familiar to her. My clothes seemed strange to her (nothing strange in jeans, as you can imagine), but she was dressed in the Slavic Saraphan, covered with flowers and animals.

After the phrase «tell me at least how to reach the nearest bus stop» Elegendika already frankly nervous, asking what I mean? (I would have connected the geolocation, but the communication in the phone has disappeared still in the mountains).

I was confused and afraid to ask the next question to this strange girl. Elegendika asked me what I was doing on my own at night, and I honestly said that I went with my friends to the stone arch. She doesn't know about the jeans and the bus, but she knows about the Arch! The girl offered to go to the local magician, so he can at least take me to the arch. I was also in favor of a wizard, if it would help and we shaved to the local

wizard's cabin.

The wizard's name was Vidon. He looks like he's 100 years old. The dry old man's cloak is hanging on him like a hanger, his eyes are light, almost transparent.

He said he can help me to return home, but will do so only under one condition. What condition? Help overthrow the local government that has ruled for 3,000 years.

My face was serious, my eyes were piercing and sharp, but I had a laugh attack. The Mage let me recover, waiting for me to calm down.

– Me? Taking down the dragons? Are you serious? How interesting?

I was told the following:

According to the laws of dragons, (I tried not to laugh, really. Just listen, to laugh, to return to the arch and friends.) when power changes, the father abdicates the throne in favor of the son, and the son within a month must marry. They marry once for a lifetime. The dragon has five years to have an heir. The dragon has no right to divorce. Within 5 years an heir should be born. And a dragon without offspring (in 30,000 years) loses the right to the throne.

Why do you think he's telling me this story? It turns out he has a devious plan:

I must participate in the selection of brides. Win in it. Become a dragon's wife. And immediately after the wedding, Vidon will bring me home (to my world). The Dragon can not get divorce

and an heir also. But I do not care in my world for dragon marriage. This is such a simple and insidious plan. I of course said «yes no problem». I just could not have guessed that it was not a joke, not a prank.

Now I'm standing here tapping my teeth.

Chapter 5

I was walking around the room. Things are packed, dressing up doesn't make sense in a couple of hours anyway, coming down for dinner. Corset was sucking in, keeping me from breathing, keeping me from thinking.

Tired of throwing and thinking about how to live on, sank into a chair. It was located in front of the window and let a little view of the sky. Why a little? Because in a couple of hours, they'll announce that I'm being removed from the selection. And I do not know what's worse – return to the magician, not last even a day or wait for charges in connection with the conspirators, who decided to overthrow the dragon..

The chair in which I thought about my fate was in a room not quite the usual castle. The dragon lived in a cave where many rooms, halls and passages were constructed. The light in most of the halls was artificial, and in the living rooms (including those who settled in the candidates) it came through windows cut in rock or natural slits equipped with a system very similar to our plastic windows. In the castle there are no usual level of floors, the rooms are located at different altitudes, do not have the usual rectangular shape and are connected by complex corridors to memorize.

The guest rooms have no usual corners, the bedrooms are very spacious with high ceilings. The cave's a little wet and chilly, so

I dug up a warm shawl and I tucked myself into it, but whis fire in the fireplace it will be warmer in the night.

Under the rustle of the wind outside the window, in the arms of a warm shawl did not notice how she fell asleep. The knocking on the door woke up, a man came to accompany me for dinner. (Due to the complex architecture, we were strictly forbidden to move without an escort during the first two weeks, even if the space we seek to enter is located nearby.) I asked you to wait a little. Sleepy and slightly disheveled after sleeping (there was no time to take a bath, or to create a new hairstyle), but with my head held high out to the young man, and went to the verdict.

Chapter 6. Dinner

At the table all the participants gathered, something quietly discussed among themselves (I did not have time to make friends in a day, therefore silently hypnotized an empty plate). Our fire-breathing monster did not appear, but at the same time, a man entered to be 45 years old (if measured in human years) with gray temples, a proud bearing. On the whole, he may be considered beautiful, but an arrogant icy look repels him and makes him completely unattractive.

– Good evening, beautiful ladies.

Let me introduce myself, Lord Emiron, personal assistant of His Majesty. On behalf of His Highness, I welcome you and must inform you that the Heir has departed an hour ago for urgent business. It'll take three days, he won't be able to attend dinner. The castle gives you access to the castle's library, but remember that it is strictly forbidden to be unaccompanied, so call the Companion (you will now be given communications bracelets). Tell us in advance of any travel outside the castle. His Majesty has decided not to remove anyone today, you continue to the selection at full strength.

Thank you for your attention, enjoy your appetite and let me leave you.

And I walked out.

After he left the room was quiet. But it was also cut by the

sound of the dishes served, by the shuffling of the servants' clothes. The girls woke up, the sound became brighter and louder. I had no appetite for food, which is why I asked to serve me dinner in my room and walk me to my island of safety.

Chapter 7. Some Rules

So, I eat a tasty muffin in room, drink milk, enjoying the warmth of the fireplace and the lack of a corset.

I am concerned that the emperor did not specify why I did not see the dragons, and in fact the magician invented the legend, which would explain the ignorance of this world. Poor Catherine lived on a small estate on the outskirts of the empire, only people worked on the estate. I was cared for, I wasn't allowed outside the gate. So it happened that I was with a lot of things just do not come across.

But he didn't asked, which means that he will start figuring out independently, and that is dangerous for me.

But back to the selection.

For me «selection» is such a TV show where the beauties a man comes with roses and every week informs who goes home. At the end of show there are two beauties, and the whole country guesses right or left, left or right... And now he is coming to the left brunette with a predatory smile, and you're the whole month was a fan of the blonde on the right... and do not know who is more upset, you're behind a screen or she there, getting royalties... Or like in fantasy, when the rivals poison each other, prove that they know how to rule the country, but the prince chooses the same one that in all behind, but was the sweetest and most

beautiful.

So I imagined 'selection'.

But here in fact a monster instead of a handsome man with a rose...

Weedon laughed long after my version of the beauty contest and told me what was really coming.

Okay, first of all, the emperor have the right not to exclude anyone until the last day, just announce his decision when the time comes. There are no requirements for a new member, invariably only total number not more than thirteen participants

Third, the choice itself lasts six months (in this place I had to accept that I had lost my job, my belongings from the rented apartment will end up in unknown places, and the relatives will go mad with grief, because it is not possible to survive and not be discovered for so long).

Fourth, only the ceremony of acquaintance (meadow), the ceremony of announcement and the ceremony of marriage are regulated. The selection process itself and the types of competitive tasks depend on the Emperor's preferences and are agreed only with him. Participants are notified in the process.

Why is that? He's choosing a woman he can't divorce for hundreds of years. Accordingly, the time limit for selection is quite long.

Now about me. Very tormented by the question, both physiologically and most importantly why a human being should be a wife and, more difficult, a mother of dragons. And I'm

still an ordinary person, the portal does not aroused my dragon's blood, did magician magician and so on... So why would the monster fire-breathing, even greater than the growth of me at least twice to choose me as a couple??

If in order, first to the question "How?" I was told the following:

Dragons look like ordinary people. They become monsters only when they want to fly, hunt or fight, generally at will or spontaneously for defense. Children from marriage to humans are born as an ordinary child, the transformation starts from the third year of life. The child must have a mentor by this time. (What about eggs? Magician said that there is an island of active volcanoes, where are living pterodactyls that lay eggs... But the dragons are viviparous) so the argument «I can not lay eggs» doesn't work.

On the second question «why, we live much less», Vidon replied that it is necessary to tell about the history of the rulers:

So, a few thousand years ago, or a little more, an ancestor of the current ruler was wounded in the war, was to the brink of death in the mountains alone, but accidentally fell into my world, where he was found, rescued and loved by the beautiful maiden Feodosius. The dragon fell in love with the maiden, returned, married and lived happily, the soul in the soul, but not for long (people in this world Physically here feel better, the empress had the best doctors and magicians, and yet she lived to her 100 years and died).

The heir grew up, his father bored, mistresses changed, but one day he got drunk and flew to our world. Villages burned, forests fired, the arrows of the beast did not take, in general for my world catastrophe. But the alcohol weathered off, the dragon calmed and the locals went to negotiate. What can men do to appease a deity? Blood sacrifices and the most beautiful virgins.

Dragon ate Slaughtered lamb and moved into his world 13 girls of different compositions and appearance (although from tears they were not much like beauties already), settled them in his castle, and went headlong into affairs of state, leaving the girls in the care of son's mentor.

The son was by then a grown man, attracted to one of the sacrificial maidens, and after six months, the young dragon decided to announce that he was getting married. The father did not object, the son married, the authority transferred (with headache of War with werewolves).

Junior loved his Svetlana, but their happy was short-lived also. In one of the battles against the werewolves, he died. Leaving his little son and wife in the care of a parent.

Senior dragon, having learned about the death of her son burned most of the land of werewolves, those who survived accepted the dragon's rule and still are part of the empire (the truth is many dream of regaining freedom and power).

When he returned home with a victory, Dragon was restless, and once again went to let off steam on the other side of the portal... And again the sacrificial lamb and girls. Dragon liked

the role of a deity, and he began to fly every 5 years, taking part in the festival in his honor, eating lamb and taking the girls. But what to do with the harem of crying girls so quickly replenished?

The emperor didn't planned to marry, mistresses in such an amount dragon did not need, but also but did not want to give up «holiday in honor of «God of the dragon» also. Celebration of it was getting more interesting by the year. People began to prepare theatrical productions with dragon masks, invented technical novelties, the girls themselves gathered different nationalities. In general, the portal has become an outlet of the sovereign. And refuse the victims was impossible refuse because he is a «deity»

And therefore he gathered a council to develop the rules. They decided as follows:

1. Before a dragon marries, to give him a choice of 13 maidens. He must communicate with them for at least six months, the contenders may live all the time in a castle, the emperor may replace any of the maidens (this is in case he wants to go again to Land of people).

2. Every five years the palace arranges a ball, to let girls meet a couple.

3. On the outskirts of the empire to create a settlement Old Believers, to resettle people there are not ready to live among two-faced (dragons and werewolves). (It turned out that not all the girls were able to believe in and get used to a new life, and frankly went mad).

So I have, first of all, a plausible legend (a human settlement

exists, some behind high walls are really completely closed and barely communicate with the world), and, secondly, a right to participate (according to the law, if a person from such a settlement wishes to participate, they cannot be refused but they may be expelled or replaced the next day. However, few people in the settlements themselves know about this, so they do not claim the right.)

4. The girls who did not choose a pair at the ball or the Royal selection, but refuse to live in human settlements provides a work.

So, rules are created, the war finished with the victory of the emperor. Grandson of the emperor grew up and it was time to try out the rules with the selection.

But the grandson fell in love with the maiden of the dragon family, took advantage of the opportunity of replacement and put a chosen one in the castle. Six months later he announced his choice, married and lived in a marriage with his beloved 300 years. These 300 are considered the golden Reign in dragon history. The dating balls for the nobility were still held, there were no wars during this period, and our lucky man asked his grandfather to bring things that are not present in this world from his travels (he himself could not walk through the portal, too much jealous wife he had). This period was recorded as the Age of the Flourishing Arts, Science, Technology and Magic.

The new emperor decided to complete the regulations (knowing that the next selection would be for the son).

First, the right of dragons to send their daughters for selection has been secured.

And the final change: if after six months the heir has not decided on a choice, the coronation and transfer of power are postponed, and after two years a new selection is made.

And then two things happened:

1. As a gift to our lover of sacrifices was given to a beautiful woman, to whom a certain George has turned out to be in love. The guy was young, hot, and our emperor was quite the opposite. George became a local hero who killed monster and even on his coat of arms painted the defeated dragon. So the active communication of worlds was interrupted, the new emperor did not want to walk between worlds. The method of transition is preserved only by the Emperor's family (in the library) and by some Mage-keepers.

2. Grew up new ruler.

New selection was carried out, the Queen is determined (again chose the dragon), but there was no love in marriage. During the six months allotted for selection, the families of the future wife and husband discussed: the merger of capital, rules (including the freedom of choice of lovers, after the birth of heirs), the appointment of some relatives in key positions, and so on.

The following three generations of emperors entered into arranged marriages, but each of them followed the tradition and ritual of selection

It means that the monster with which we are acquainted probably already have a bride with whom the deal of the century is being negotiated. But it's night, so I'll start working out a plan tomorrow. Right after breakfast.

Why i didn't it before? I had 3 weeks for it in the house of Vidon, but only when I saw the monster with my own eyes I realized that it wasn't a hoax.

When in front of you stands up monster and gives a volley very real fire, and his skin looks like a live crocodile – you start to realize the reality of what is happening.

If it had been friends joke, it wouldn't have lasted more than a week. They are not so cruel to let me to miss the flight. So we will have to accept and live in a cave.

Chapter 8. Making plans

The morning greeted timid dawn, fighting mood, clothing home. (Dresses I had brought with me to the castle were bought for me: four of it were mind-bogglingly memorable, three were solemnly beautiful, fifteen were decently closed and securely tightened, and two were free, without a corset, in the style of peasant women).

Today I was dressed in one of the peasants. Because the heir was absent, there's no one to seduce, so there's no reason to suffer with a corset. I Plaited my hair, belted my dress, and put a communication bracelet on my arm, and went down to Breakfast in this modest fashion.

In the dining room there was silence again, and now the cause of it was my appearance. It turns out they without a corset does not come out, I'm a redneck against them. But I sat down at the table and said, breaking the silence

«Enjoy your appetite, excuse me if my appearance seems strange to you, but in the estate from where I arrived we wear dresses with corset rarely, I am more accustomed to a simple tailoring».

The beauties exhaled, mentally crossing me out from rivals, because the girl in the bag with the pigtails can't be the Empress of dragons.

The breakfast was delicious, the crepes with the cream

cheered up the mood, my head gradually lined up the next plan of action. I'll start it with the library. It is necessary to assess the amount of information available and useful.

I looked around our friendly company at the table, and I discovered that I was the only one who didn't talk to anyone. The beauties were actively sharing impressions, plans and news from their families.

So, after finishing the pancakes, still silently I left the table, calling an escort in advance. The chair screeching caused silence and bewilderment again, but I think I've already broken all the rules, so leaving will be just one point in the long list of oddities of the girl from the outskirts.

My preliminary action plan consists of four points

1. The library: Try to find information about the portal, to escape early by myself. And to find any information on the local world order.
2. Avoid the heir to the extent possible. It is desirable simply to avoid expulsion.
3. Avoid contenders. Without friends, I half-year somehow hold out, but how to deal with those who uzreet in me a threat to their future of the Union, I have not thought of.
4. Finally, find out who is a contractual bride. What should I do with this information and especially how to get it is not quite clear yet, but I will leave it as a goal.

Chapter 9. Knowledge is power, nescience is disaster

Library – a room with an infinite number of racks filled with books, part of the halls is closed for visiting. There's no damp here, and there are deep, comfortable, soft chairs for visitors. The library will be my favorite room!

The caretaker of the library, wizened little man with a cane and a small bald spot smiled affably.

– What's your name, young lady?

– Catherine.

– Catherine, I have to tell you about the rules of the hall: in the reading room at the same time you can leave with him no more than three books, reserve for no more than three days. In your room, you can take no more than one and not more than for a month. What do you want to read?

– It is possible the book, which described the events of the first selection?

– What language do you prefer to read? Slavic, imperial, foreign?

It became hot, fingers cramped little sweat trickle slid down along the spine.

– Let's, one in each language?

The caretaker probably thought I was a very educated girl,

but no, I just didn't think the alphabet of our worlds could be different.

After receiving three books bound in leather, I moved it on the table next to a soft comfortable chair.

The text of the first book was written in signs similar to our hieroglyphics, the text of the second was reminiscent of the cuneiform of Egypt, the third book is clearly ancient, written by hand ink in Old Slavic.

None of the lyrics are available to me, so I started going through all the books to see if they had pictures, sketching out. But here, too, I was unlucky, all three books contained only text.

Tormented for an hour with the text in Slavonic, trying to somehow make out the words and recall letters (because at least in passing, but is sometimes found on the internet transcription to the alphabet), having not advanced by a millimeter, I had to admit that on the first item of short plan did not go well from the beginning. I returned the books and upset trudged to my room.

Chapter 10

So, books are not available. I can try to make friends with someone of the girls, but how can I explain the fact that I cannot read. To admit that i have grown up not only in the wilderness, and illiterate to all other disadvantages?

Another option would be to ask the Emperor's assistant to train me for six months, but he may not have the authority to, worse still, is the new one excuse to suspend me from further participation.

From the sad thoughts distracted knock on the door, it is lunchtime.

On the way to the dining hall, I asked the accompanying to find the emperor's assistant, and I was informed that as soon as he was free, I would be contacted and escorted.

The dining room is full of girls with the luxury jewelry and dresses. My head ached slightly from the failure to find a way out of the situation.

– Katrin, I noticed that you don't talk to anyone. My name is Rosalind. I would like to offer you a walk in the park. How do you look at it?

– I'd love to take a walk with you. I must warn the escort.

Rosalind stood out for the other dragon girls. She was too fragile even compared to me, and against the background of the other contenders seemed painfully subtle. Short height, thin

waist, small chest, narrow thighs. There was no boiling energy inherent in dragons, or a low chest voice, or a deep cleavage. In general, it was not standard for dragons. If it were a human being, I'd say she's like a refined aristocrat, someone who strictly follows a diet, keeps her back perfectly straight, and her speech is exceptionally correct. For the Emperor's wife, it might be perfect, but why would she have a friend like me? It's completely confusing.

Chapter 11

The second item of the plan (to keep away from participants far away) is broken. The walk with Rosalind was surprisingly pleasant. The area surrounding the castle was quite extensive, and we headed towards the gazebo by the lake.

– Rosalind, can you tell me how the selection is going? I don't really know much about it. Are there any competitions, assignments, tests of knowledge?

– Selections are not held as often, but there is no strict list of activities (except for the day of acquaintance and the final ball at which the emperor announces his decision). Participants can organize evenings at their own discretion, having previously agreed with the assistant. Nadine, for example, wants to show the theatrical production, is now appends the play and picks actors. Would you like to participate?

– Me? No, I think my position here is too shaky. Preparing a role is takes a long time. (not to mention I can't read it that I can't read it).

– Well, first of all, any actress can be eliminated. And second, a contestant can invite a guest (mage for example). Thus, if involved participant is excluded from the selection, she can return to the performance as a guest.

– And yet I will refuse. Will you play in the play?

– Of course, participation is entirely voluntary. I warned

Nadine that before i'll give my consent i read a play. On the one hand, it is an occasion once again to remind myself to the Emperor, on the other hand I did not want to appear in a bad light.

– Yes, you're absolutely right. Tell me please, when she completes the writing and distribution of roles. I can be in the reserve. Do not look like that, it's just in case some of the participants became ill and unable to participate.

– Actress in a stock, an interesting idea. I think she'll be thrilled. she's always dreamed about her own theater.

– How long have you known each other?

– Since childhood – Rosalind's face illuminated a happy smile, and flashes of light flared in her eyes. And she was just a kid dreaming about the role of a director. The actors for her play were servants, nurse, and of course I am. It was fun, especially when erected decorations from scrap materials. The only one who scolded little Nadine was her brother. Emiren thought a lady couldn't be an actress, let alone a director.

– Wait, Lord Emiren, the Emperor's aide, he's Nadine's brother?

– Yes, an older, harmful and boring brother. He is very angry at her sister, for the decision to put the play in the Palace, but within the framework of selection cannot deny. – Rosalind's smile became even brighter, and her back more straight- although he insists that it is a dishonour to the family.

– Can you be in the auditorium for participants not involved

in the performance? And how to know the date and place? Will there be invitations?

– In the dining room there is a Board (it is now empty so you probably did not pay attention to it). As soon as the event is agreed with the emperor, it is displayed on the board. The names of the participants, the date, the place and the type are indicated. The type can be closed (private for the emperor), open (free entry for anyone) or on invitation. The number of questions in my head was increasing, but it was not possible to ask any questions, because the chaperon came and warned that the assistant was available and offered to meet now, he had a small window in the schedule. I apologized to Rosalind, offered to take another walk the day after tomorrow if she had the chance, and went to Lord Emiren.

Chapter 12. It's hard to be a poor relative

The office of the assistant was as spacious as all rooms, with a round table with six chairs in the center, a wide working table near a window, opposite which stood two chairs. One of them invited me to sit down.

– Good afternoon, Catherine, what brings you to my office?

– I'd like to ask you a few questions, as you may have noticed, I don't know the selection rules very well.

– Yes, of course – the Lord is conveniently located in his desk chair, folded his fingers into the lock, leaned the chin on it and focused on my face. (Freckles seems counts)

– The first question, how free are we to move? In the absence of the Prince, I would like to pay a visit to a relative, but I do not know if we can leave the castle, or invite guests, and should I call the carriage or it is provides by castle?

– You are free to move, you can leave the castle for any number of days, the castle carriage will take you to the place and take you back at the specified time. All I ask is that you inform me of your departure. You can invite the guest to the castle only receive permission of heir, so try to meet friends or family in the city.

– Okay, well, in that case, I'll be out half the day tomorrow,

leaving at 8:00 a.m. the second question is to be honest a little awkward.

The Lord smiled only in the corners

– From what I understand participant may make a surprise – invite an actor or a magician, to make a gift to the heir... But what if the participant is limited in money resources? Perhaps you have a dedicated budget for such a case? – Paint the face flooded, eyes hidden in the floor, and my fingers gripped the tortured someone to me armrests. And Lord was silent for what seemed an eternity.

– The first applicants did receive money for clothing and jewellery. But over time, representatives of rich ancient houses started to participate in the contest, and no one had raised this issue before you. So we do this, you calculate how much money you need, and I'll try to get the emperor to agree on the amount without going into the details of your surprise, I take it you're planning a surprise?

– Thank you, I will draw up a cost estimate and will bring you. Can I go?

– Yes, if there are no more wishes. – Emiren looked very thoughtful, his gaze wandered distractedly across my body, but clearly his thoughts were far away.

– Thanks again

I backed against the door, realized that I look stupid, spun around 180 degrees and extremely fast pace, almost running toward the door.

Chapter 13

Why do I need money? According to legend, I am a distant relative of (the girl who took care me in the first day on this side of the portal and to whom the carriage takes me). As part of this legend, we turned to Vidon, and he was kind enough to help fulfill the dream of a girl from village – to include in the selection. He presented money to buy a few dresses That's all. Guardianship or kinship with the magician would draw unnecessary attention to us, so I am a distant relative of the person (Elenelika just a man), who appear suddenly out of the blue with a dream: I want to be the princess.

But now due to the same verisimilitude, I can't get money from Weedon, and to communicate need a reason. Feel 007 in a far-off kingdom. Do not want? So I did not dream.

When I reached the place, I released the driver and warned him to return by about four o'clock, and making sure that the coach slid a sufficient distance so as not to be detected i trudged to Weedon.

The Mage did not know of my desire to visit him, and was therefore disheartened and disturbed by my arrival.

The first question that came up was:

– What, you've already been kicked out? – he asked this question with no anger, but rather with surprise, but they let me in, they poured tea and prepared to listen.

– Look, it's okay, no one's kicked me out yet, but I need to talk to you.

– Yes, of course. How are you? How's the relationship with the Heir? How's the experience with the castle?

– I'm fine, the Emperor is out of town. The castle is a bit damp and a little gloomy, but not about that. I need to understand what means of communication you have here (while only the bracelet is mastered, press – comes the chaperone). I'll try to explain what I'm used to in my home, and you tell me if you have something like that.

First of all, we have a building which is called the post office, it is possible to bring the letters, and they will be delivered after some time a person anywhere in the world.

– We do not have the post office but there are messengers, they will deliver a letter to the addressee and there is an artifact of exchange. Artifacts, if they are tuned to each other, open something similar to a small portal and you can drop into it by a small object (letter or gift).

– And can I have a sheet and paper? I'll write it down.

– Yes, of course

– We have a phone. A person in one city can talk to another or a group of people in another city with this device.

– We have a communication artifact, but you can talk at the same time with only one and you need to pre-arrange a code activating the connection, set up the artifact at the reception

– We have a number of digits instead of a code, which is

injected into the phone's memory. Can you redesign artifact so that several people can be connected at the same time?

– Why would I do that?

– I'll explain later, so can you create one?

– I'll try it, of course

– So what else... We have an answering machine... Well, for example, is not convenient now to talk or you're away from your artifact, and another person later can not call back... That person dials a number, dictate a message and sent... the blinking lamp on your screen show you, that you have a missed call and you can listens a voice message later..

– Not all words are clear to me, but the point is clear. No, there is no such thing. Do you think you need it?

– I need it in the first place. As it turned out, I can not read and write, we have a different alphabet. You can modify your artifact?

– I'll try – he scratched his chin thoughtfully

– And also, I need to try learn to read. Can you get me an alphabet with pictures?

– Well, how can I give it to you?

– Tomorrow is the last day when there is no heir and I will be able to leave in the morning for a short while in a city, is there some cafes near the castle?

– Yes, there is" at the rock" for example. What time?

– Let's go to 11. I forgot about another device – a voice recorder... You turn on the button, and it records everything that

he hears around him, can do a lot of records, and they are stored in order, until you delete it

– How much is interesting in your world, and we thought it was backwards and apart from the sacrificial lamb you have nothing to offer.

– Not Wonderland, but we do not quite backward, even though we do not have dragons and magic and we live quite a bit. But back to the point, I agreed with the emperor's aide for compensation of some of my expenses. But, I have to provide a list stating the purpose, amount and recipient.

So I need to:

- 1) Artefact of exchange
- 2) Communication artifact
- 3) Finalization of the communication artifact regarding the recording and storage of voice messages and finalization to the possibility of simultaneous communication with 3-5 opponents
- 4) The artifact of recording and storing the speech around.

So if you can create such artifacts and announce the cost and timing of their creation I will try to get money to buy them.

Weedon silent. Silent and looked at me enthusiastically. – Unbelievable! – Finally, he said – Incredible! – he said, and walked around the room. – In a matter of two days to agree about financing! You know, like the ministers for months knock money for their projects? – he paused briefly, looked at me and walked further

– But we haven't been given a penny yet

– You do not know Emiron. If he didn't reject at once, it almost certainly will be issued. I still can not believe it! Do you realize that if I create these artifacts, I will have stable orders from the Imperial Palace, and it is not just wealth, this recognition! – Weedon returned to the seat-Catherine, now I do not want to overthrow the Emperor.

– Vidon, first, we need to create these artifacts, try them out, and get the funding, the fame, and these orders. And if it works out, and you decide not to overthrow the Emperor, you'll back me home before the final ball.

Only advance figure out how to escape then from werewolves.

– Yes, werewolves are not easy. They won't forgive.

I realized that it was better to leave him alone with his thoughts.

– Weedon, I'll go.

– Yeah, see you tomorrow.

And he sat there, apparently lost in his thoughts. I Did not return it to the harsh reality, I closed the door and went back to Elenelike.

Chapter 14

Elegelika met me at home, we drink tea with herbs and berries, baked pancakes and sat behind a table in the garden among the green and smells of summer.

And before I could even take a sip, Elegelika started asking me questions, how are the contestants dressed, who has the most beautiful dress? What kind of furniture in the rooms, the halls? And the curtains and the wallpaper? Did the prince like? And the food is delicious? And in the garden which flowers grow? Not only did she ask questions, but she was interested in a thousand details of which she was putting together a picture, but unfortunately, I was not as attentive, so I shared what I had learned . But i promised that in the future will be more attentive to the interiors of the palace rooms, style palace ladies and taste Palace food. About Prince answered with restraint: not to my taste. I did not say that prince is fire-breathing monster and a special love for crocodile appearance, though winged, i never entertained.

– Elegelika, I have a delicate request to make. You know, I lived in the lands of the portal and as it turned out, even though we speak the same language, but we have different writing. I can not read and write letters, and for the future Empress is incredible disadvantage. Even if my chances to become the minimum, I would like to learn the letter, could you help me?

Elegelica jumped from the chair, and with the words «of course help» retired to the house. She returned with a pile of books and a notebook.

– So, from these books, my nephews were learning to read, and there's alphabet, coloring, assignments, fairy tales. They are for the very little ones. – And notebook with handles for training. Here is the book of fairy tales – she picked up a thick folio – there is a large font and a lot of pictures. Kids often check the reading by syllable.

– How lucky I am that it's your house was on my way! Thank you so much!

The time flew by, the books and the cakes were packed, with happiness and thought "with such friends I certainly will not be lost in this world" I would return to the castle, looking out the fields and forests on the way. The green was saturated, the road was dusty, the sun was bright and the wheels creaked. In general, I entered the castle though not much tired, but happy.

Chapter 15. Stirlitz's Failure

In anticipation of accompanying I was walking down the hall, examining the pattern of the marble floor (he was black and sleek, in the center laid out drawing of the sun, the color of gold), white columns, stretching high up in the cave vaults. I tried to memorize the very details that Elegelika asked for. But the study was interrupted by the pleasant male voice of a handsome brunette:

– Hello, Catherine. You look wonderful

I looked down at my dress, a little dusty, absolutely not perceptible, without a corset. Looked up at the stranger, I met the gaze of his blue eyes, noted the high growth and tightened figure. I gave short answer – «Thank you» – and returned to looking down the hall.

The Interlocutor silently studied me, obviously not expecting such neglect from me, probably local womanizer (appearance pretty, voice fascinating, I am, for example, at the edge of the eye studying it), used to the ladies catching his attentions signs. I am so tired today forces to flirt with the local playboy left.

– Good morning, Your Majesty. Did you return earlier than planned? – a voice said Rosalind, who sat in a deep curtsy.

I felt faint, it is necessary so to fail the task for agents 007 so not to know the subject of persecution so to speak in the face. But I had nothing to do once again unfold in the direction of the heir.

It seemed too late to bow, so I simply froze in silence, waiting for an answer.

– Yes, Rosalind, as you can see. Would you like to walk with me in the garden?

– With pleasure, Your Majesty – and she took the brunet under his arm sending me a perfectly sincere smile.

– Have a nice evening Catherine

– Thank you, Your Majesty – I said quietly. From rainbow mood was gone.

– Have a nice evening Catherine

– Thank you, Your Majesty – quietly said by me. There was no trace of the rainbow.

Chapter 16

I should have worn the lowest cleavage I have at dinner. o distract the heir from analyzing my behavior. Bright red color, well opened collarbone and a little chest.

In the dining room this time, I was one of the first, so instead of taking a seat at the table, I went to the event board. There are events marked on it: a play to be held in three months (open to all), a culinary evening from a certain Zarina (invited) in three weeks, and a private dance from Faride next week. – I could get you an invitation to a cooking party- the heir was too close behind my back- or do you think about how to overshadow faride's dance? – at this point the heir raised his hand and gently ran the outside of finger from my neck to the shoulder.

–I'm bad dancer- i retreated from the prince and turned to face him. – I think I'll knit your socks so you won't freeze in the damp castle

– Catherine, dragons do not freeze.

– Good to you, and why fireplaces if you do not freeze? I'm here every night trying to stay close to him, it is terrible to think, as here in the winter.

– For beauty. Fire in it is a very beautiful and fascinating sight, isn't it?

The room became a little noisy, the sound pushes chairs interrupted our conversation about beauty, and I hastened to take

his place at the table, away from the heir.

On the right hand of the heir sits Nadine, most likely the arranged bride, next to her Rosaline, placed Bleckle on the left, followed by Farida, Zarina on my right, Darin on my left. This girl, as far as I knew loved horses, never missed a single horse riding or hunting, swordsman, willingly accepts the challenge and from men. Darina was the embodiment of the warrior: high height, pronounced arm muscles, low loud voice. Her movements were more rapid and abrupt than smooth.

In front of the heir sits Assol. The girl had bright red hair, falling down her back with large, sunny, green eyes, fascinating with her beauty. My dress paled next to her outfit. What she was wearing was a work of art. The creator of this creation is incredibly talented. Dress embroidered with small stones so that it shimmered in the light, (it seemed to dress sprinkled of diamonds). The dress was also decorated with green stones (as our emeralds) and red (as our rubies) , blossoming on a black silk dress with delicate flowers. Assol of ancient and powerful family. So she like Nadine can be a contender for an arranged marriage. Other names I unfortunately, did not remember, so just examine on a variety of dresses and parties at the table. And then focused on my stew with potatoes. That's surprising, such contrast to our worlds, but language and cuisine we were similar? I saw as Nadine and Rosalind easy to feel in communion with the successor of (he has a long full name .. Ridon Amaral Deron kind of Drakodar).

It was impossible to leave before the heir, but I did not have time to warn Amiron about what I need tomorrow to the city in the morning, and the heir was in no hurry to leave the table.

– Katrin, your plate was empty for a long time, with the girls you not communicate all the time fidgeting in a chair, you want to leave ? – heir voice seemed friendly and quiet, but the issue and appeal to my address so unexpected that girls fell silent and all eyes are directed in my direction.

– To be honest, I really wanted to leave early, if it would not insult you, Your Majesty. The fact that I made an appointment in the city with friends, but I didn't have time to warn Lord Emiron that I was going away . I would like to have time to find him, before he live home.

– How long will you be gone?

– I have to be in town by 11:00, the meeting will not take more than a couple hours.

– Well, Catherine, can go. I let Emirom go to the family estate, but the coach will give you tomorrow. Good night.

– Good night.

Chapter 17

Sitting in the park near the castle, breathe fresh air, enjoy the birds singing, i was thinking about conversation with magician, took place in a cafe.

So, a simple communication artifact costs 30,000 gold (unot yet had time to get used to their prices, but for dinner wizard paid 1 000). Weedon said the multipurpose artifact while nobody was producing, but he will try. (I had also tell about the flash drive, plugs for them to exchange information, adding features). For two experimental artifact Weedon invoice for the sum of 100 000 Golden. They will work as standard communication artifacts, but Widon will create 5 cells (connectors) for the artifacts – updating. They will be ready in a month, by the same deadline he will have made two crystals under the connectors with the function of sending and storing voice messages. There'll be 40,000 more to be paid for these rocks.

The crystal of the record «dictaphone» Vidon will make for me for free, fearing that we will be suspected of spying and will not pay at all.

I also asked whether there is such a thing as a patent, co-founder ... I know I'm going back to my world and I can't use the money, but you never know what can happen. Their Patent calls the "Certificate of discoverer". It has three types: 1) non-transferable to third parties (artifacts can produce only a

magician creator), 2) with the right to rent (mage, manufactured artifact pays rent to the creator) and 3) the free circulation after a certain period of time.

To register object magic can only magicians. But sales of the store, the purchase of stones, workshops on creation of blanks to fill magic, that such companies can be jointly administered, and I can get a percentage. My thoughts already painted small shop local analogue cellular store.

From fantasies distracted voice of Ridon.

– Good afternoon, Catherine!

– Good afternoon! – blinking in the sunlight, looked up to the heir, he towered over me, and it seemed even higher than I remembered. Assol held on to his elbow, her dress was white, straight and closed, her hair had a neat white hat, and a lace white umbrella over her head.

And by pursed lips of red beauties, I realized that once again violated the established etiquette. Remembering that in front of me future emperor, not simply brunet with blue eyes I jumped off the bench and curtsied (as I remember from the movie, I hope not too sloppy), repeated:

– Good day Your Majesty.

Lips of Assol gonna relaxed, eyes softened. But eyes of the heir slightly darkened and narrowed.

– Catherine, Lord Emiren told me yesterday that you wanted to discuss some expenses for your event. Unfortunately, he will not be in the palace for at least two weeks, due to the worsening

health of the lord's mother, so I suggest we discuss it directly with me. I can give you an hour in my office at 16:00 today.

– Thank you, Your Majesty.

The Heir nodded and continued walking with Assol.

Here's a beautiful couple, I admired them. The Assol in this delicate white blossom, the red-haired curls around the hat like a little corner of the sun, and the heir in his black, with a straight back. Slow steps, Assol is only slightly below Ridon. They looked harmonious. I imagined myself in her place, as my head is somewhere just below his shoulders, and as my hand gets tired, trying to get to his elbow. The heir felt my long gaze, looked back and slightly raised my eyebrows in the silent question, I only shook my head and turned around slowly walked to the castle.

Chapter 18

Nadine was absent from the dinner (departed to her parents after her brother), and Rosalind took her place. I warned her I wouldn't be able to walk in the park this afternoon because of His Majesty's invitation, but I promised to look in her chambers the next day.

I warned her I wouldn't be able to walk in the park this afternoon because of His Majesty's invitation, but I promised to look in her chambers the next day.

At the appointed time, I entered the office of the heir, which consisted of three rooms: the first room was a conference room, in which up to fifty people could be accommodated. The second hall, which was used most often, housed up to twelve subjects. But I was taken to a third – a small cabinet with a fireplace. Its wall is lined with a dark tree, a window with a view of the garden, unexpectedly cozy.

– Come in, sit down in the chair by the fireplace. Wine?

– Yes, thank you very much.

Ridon poured two glasses of red wine, he gave me one, and with the second he located in the chair opposite. I admired the glare of fire, taste wine and waited for an invitation to talk. Heir treated me, the wine did not touch. I didn't dare start a conversation.

It was raining outside the window, it charged from lunch and

now sounded quiet in the background, along with the crackling logs.

– Catherine, as I understand from talking to Emirenom, you are asking to allocate funds. Have you made a list?

– Your Majesty, you see, the money I need is for a gift to you, and it has to be a surprise. So, can I not get into the details of what I'm spending?

– Try it out

– I need 140,000 on the development of the artifact, the creation of which will take at least a month. But before I give it to you, it s require to test during a couple more weeks. If testing goes well, then after a month and a half I'll give it to you, and you will give the magician certificate of invention.

– I wonder ... Who's going to test? It is dangerous?

– The assignment of the artifact itself is not dangerous at all. But Weedon says that no one before us did multifunctional artifact, so he is not sure of the stability and wants to check whether there is no side effects.

– You intrigued me, Katrin. We'll give you half by the end of the week, the other half after the test, but with one condition: I want to to be watching the results of the test. Is there anything else?

– You know, maybe it's the wine gives me the courage to voice one more wish, but I will understand if you will be surprised of my arrogance and refuse.

– You are amazing Catherine – he leaned forward. I didn't

notice when his glass was emptied, and the heir meanwhile put him on a low table with a little knocking and returned to his original position. – your speech does not seem to me provincial, but all the same words and phrases that you eat sometimes I have not heard before. – the sound of rain on the glass became clearer, I held my breath, and even seem slight intoxication wine melted. – But I digress, voice your desire.

– You know that I lived a pretty closed. I would like to see the real world. I'm asking you to let me go on a trip. I understand that a request may seem insolence, but maybe I can not only learn something new for yourself, but also be of some use? Start learn mood or identify issues on which you do not know, visit settlements of people.

– Catherine, and do not you accidentally forget why you're in a castle?

– What? – I'm honestly surprised.

– You see, Catherine, the people on this project are trying to win my heart and capture my attention. They come up with surprises, they show the most beautiful dresses, they celebrate any kind of attention, even if it's a short walk in the park. Not only are you avoiding me, but the only wish you're expressing is to get as far away as possible – the heir rose from his chair and walked to the window, I admire of his back and somehow try to deal with goosebumps fear that travel through my body – Moreover, I understand that you are waiting for that i will finance it – he turned to face me, leaning on the window sill.

I peered at him , hesitating to put my glass, which still had red fluid at the bottom of it is still splashing red liquid, slightly swinging it, hiding the trembling of my fingers

– But I'll give you a gift, Your Majesty, is not a sign of attention? And I'll go on a trip in the surroundings of your subjects, not earlier than three months (for such a serious journey must be prepared).

– For some reason, it seems to me that you most curious result of the experiment and the ability to obtain funding from the treasury of the empire, not my response to the presentation of a gift and a possible pleasure from it.

We stood in a duel views. Overall, the Heir is correct in his accusations. I'm not seriously considering it as a possible husband (though if you add a couple of glasses and leave the lighting like this. Like now.)

I need Artifacts more to survive really , but i can not to admit .
When silence lingered, the Heir said:

– Well, let's proceed as follows. An artifact money will be allocated. To make a travel decision, you have to prepare more detailed information: which lands you would like to visit , which establishments and we will return to the discussion in two weeks. The second condition, you have to prepare me a gift. But one that will target it to me. So you told something about the socks ?

– Yes, Your Majesty, but you and without them hot, and I knit bad. But well, the conditions are accepted. From me description of where and why, and a gift like socks. I will go? Outside the

window was dark, we probably time for dinner.

– Yes you are right. But I need to work, and will eat in office. I said goodbye, but in the dining room did not go, asked to file into the room. And what to present? This thought occupied my mind all the time remaining before bedtime

Chapter 19

In the morning I took out a notebook, which Elegelika presented me to practice (my days so full of events and thoughts that i didn't start study the alphabet , but I firmly promised that allocated for a class a couple of hours tomorrow). I need a notebook today to simply distribute the options.

So I divided sheet of notebook to two columns for possible gifts and for commenting in the second:

1. Bake a cake // I do not know how to look like a furnace here
2. Knitting, sewing / i'm bad in it
3. Sing // I can play a little guitar, but whether there is such a tool here.
4. Portrait // possible, but it would be a caricature, and it can be offended.
5. Maybe there is a souvenir? Shirt and socks, brandy, cup, certificate ...// no, he is not an ordinally man
6. I need to see what theatrical productions are going on, maybe buy tickets?

I feel like before February 23, and all seems silly and trivial, but because turning the leaf started to draw Dragon with flowers in their teeth before the tower with the princess. It at least distract from the sprawling thoughts.

After drawing a leaf from a notebook, i made an envelope from a blank sheet and drew a dragon with a kitten on it. And

maybe the envelope would never have made it to the addressee, but at that point, I got a knock.

The young man (his name was Richard, I recently asked, accompanies me every day, and was silent all the time) went to my room. He nodded, but when he saw, the envelope in my hands stretched out his hands, asking to whom to send.

– Do not worry, it's for the heir, I'll find a way to send – I mumbled.

But Richard did not give up and took envelope – I will I'll send it through the Secretary of His Majesty, while you have breakfast. I will be glad to help you.

And I had no choice how to give him my letter, stupid to retreat. Nevertheless, no signature. Maybe he wouldn't guess? And, if he guess, would forgive me this little prank?

That evening, I received an answer to that question. On the table beside the bed, lay a living rose, and under it the envelope, inside picture: Tower Princess, to the tower of the charge of stairs, and the stairs down happy and fat dragon, in the teeth it holds a rescued sad kitten.

Chapter 20

But before messages with the kitten was still far off, the morning just begun. And the first thing I went to the library. I asked for some book about the musical instruments of the peoples of the empire, only necessarily with images of those very instruments. So, what tools we had two thousand years ago? Flute, harp ... Could they have also come to the creation of the guitar.

I scroll through the entire book, but an identical instrument did not found.

There were so many variations as familiar to me, similar, and completely unknown. But we also have a variety of strings, but the sound of balalaika, for example, is quite different from the guitar, which means I have to look in the music store (maybe I will be lucky to find something suitable by the sound.)

Putting aside the book, I started to study the alphabet. I had one version of the alphabet from Elegelica and a second version from the wizard. I found the pictures with the letters (you know, as we do for children over the letter «A» painted apple), copied to his notebook and put the transcription of the usual Russian letters. So I can slowly begin to learn to read. But not today. It's time to go on a visit. So I can slowly begin to learn to read. But not today. It's time to go on a visit Rosalind.

Chapter 21

Chambers Rosalind combined the emerald velvet canopy, swamp green sofa upholstery, dark wallpaper in the small green flower, brown, heavy curtains and furniture made of wood (not easy and graceful , but rather massive) bed wide high-backed cabinet with heavy doors and dressing table with wide mirror.

Rosalind sat me down on the couch and poured tea in a cup of the most delicate china.

– How's Nadine's mom's health? – I asked – Postpone she the play?

– No, the play was written long ago. Nadine only edits and rewrites details on roles. She promised to finish before the end of the month. We'll start rehearsals in July. She was, by the way, very happy your desire to insure one of the participants in case something happens.

– By the way, I thought I could rehearse with everyone one by one reading with the opponent to be able to navigate in the text and suggest from behind the scenes, so to speak be prompter.

– Great idea, we'll give you a copy of the play and we'll try. Let's start with me.

– As with the male roles? Some of the servants, or disguised themselves of our participants?

– You don't know Nadine very well – she said Rosalind with a smile. Some roles will play our escorts. The protagonists be

played by the stars of the capital theater.

– Will they come to us or are we going out to rehearse at the theater?

– On Tuesdays we to them, on Thursdays they are to us. 10 rehearsals is too short, but they have a tight schedule of rehearsals and performances, so again, your help will be invaluable.

– I can't wait to read play and start rehearsing.. And costumes, decorations?

– Some costumes and ready sets will be provided by the theater, the rest will be financed by the emperor.

– I'm a little sorry I turned down a part. – I smiled back. Besides the fact that I really wanted to take part in the rehearsals, I think it is also an opportunity to learn the writing faster.– Rosalind, I wanted to ask you for help. See, I know too little about the real world. I made that point to the emperor, and now I have to map out the itinerary and give as much detail as possible. He promised to look it up and give me an answer. I need help with the map. You do know more about what worth to visit.

Rosalind was thinking. I did not expect that such a simple request could cause a range of emotions and deep thoughts.

–Rosalind, is there something wrong? I'm not insisting if you can't for some reason, just say I won't be offended.

– I will help. Of course, I'll help you. I just want to ask you – she stopped for a while – Please take me on this trip.

I got up from the couch and began pacing the room.

– Rosalind, but this selection, and purpose of the project to

explore each other. His Majesty and so not happy that I instead of being next to – leave. If I tell him that now two of us... I do not know how to tell him about it? – I froze in front of the girl, she was completely calm.

– Catherine, our families are friends since childhood. Yes, I often talked to Nadine and her brother than to heirs, but believe me, the time to look at each other and fall in love was enough, and my presence or absence for some time will not change anything in our relationship. I, as you rightly noted, better acquainted with the geography and traditions of the country, and therefore can help you navigate, but my knowledge is mainly theoretical, I do not have much traveled. After all, I'm curious. I can to talk to an heir myself if you agree.

– Well, if you have long been familiar, probably, he will not mind. I'd be happy if you could keep me company.

– Great, I promised Nadine to come for the weekend, I'll be back in a couple of days and start, okay?

Chapter 22. The legend of dragons

The next three weeks passed unnoticed. In the morning, I learned to read, in the afternoon I took a walk in the park, and later in the evening, Rosalind and I moved to the library and deepened into the study of maps and the construction of a route.

In general, the geography of the empire can be divided into four parts:

In the south there are mostly dragons, in the north werewolves, in the west magicians, in the east people. In the center, stands the castle of the emperor in the heart of the empire.

The territories of the distribution is not legally fixed, but due to the ability to create marriages. As it turned out, in marriage of the dragon and werewolf only can be born man (rarely magician). People live much less both species, watch as aging and dying your child is difficult. Additionally, both dragons and werewolves are pack and drawn to their own, which also generates conflicts. In alliance with any of the human kind is born dragon, werewolf or mage but never a human. A powerful wizard is not born very often, but it can be born in any couple (with a lot of luck with the ancestors). That is such a complex genetics. As a result, each species tries to choose from their own kind.

I have long tormented by the question, why is it possible union of man and dragon.

Rosalind replied: "So we came from the same ancestors"

I specified" Dragons and werewolves from Adam and Eve?», to which I learned the answer;

– I do not know who the Adam and Eve, but how can you not know the legend of the origin of species ?... But, you're a province may have slightly different legends. Okay, I'll tell you

So, lived on a planet human beings, among them grew mad scientist. He dreamed of eternal life, and even a way to come up with. He took four energies, put them in the vessel, mix them up and gave the first subject a drink. That's how the first magician came to be. Different doses of energy were given to the next subject, so magicians now can live for 100-200 years.

But the scientist was insane, and he continued his experiments and was able to mix the blood of the wizard, the energy of the Elements and the blood of the wolf. Thus were born werewolves. Life expectancy has gone from 100 to 300. But the scientist didn't stop there either.

Instead of the blood of the wolf he took the blood beast unseen, fragment falling stars and the world saw the dragon. They are able to fly, spewing fire and live up to 500 years.

And it's quite possible that the mad scientist developed many more species, but he died of old age, never having the courage to inject himself with the serum of one of the previously invented species to himself.

The man was first for all the creations, it is ideal for any of the 4 types, but live too little.

Chapter 23. Zarina

In addition to classes cartography with Rosalind, this week I was able to have lunch with Elegelik and tell her about the evening of culinary delights Zarina.

Zarina evening was billed as a private event. But the heir promised to get an invitation for me.

The envelope with the invitation arrived with an additional investment – a masterpiece man-made in the form of a drawing of the Dragon in a tuxedo, which in one hand held a cake and in the second bag with gold. At the bottom in block letters signed "on the dress and women's stuff." In the same envelope was a decent sum of Gold.

Before the feast of the abdomen remained three days, and for such a short time, it was necessary to have time to spend money. Shopping we went with Rosalind.

I did not want to buy something challenging, but very modest purchase can offend Ridon. Not only was the dress chosen not modest, but it was once again a violation of decency. The only relief was that the event was closed, which meant that not many people would see me in it. Having noticed it in the window of the shop, I could not try it on, but was circling in front of the mirror, understood – «that's it!!». Its silk fabrics color was bright pink, Dress with open shoulders attracted the attention, but it was the open belly that made it challenging (up of dress was cut off, as a

result of me wore a wide embroidered skirt on the floor and the topic with V-neck.) . I wish I had some jewelry, and I thought long earrings would be appropriate.

Back at the castle after shopping, tired but happy, passed in response to the heir drawing Princess, who is holding the same bag, and in the upper corner of the cloud. In a cloud, the princess smacks a dragon on the cheek.

In the dining hall (which was used for tasting), I entered with the perfect posture and the only thought: «and did not overdo with the open body parts».

Ridon sat in the center, but from the wide side of the table. I was seated on my right hand by the prince. To my right, Darin. To the left of the heir Rozalind, then Emiron (he returned from the estate). On the table at that time was a roasted pig, a duck (, a rabbit in cream sauce, salads of various kinds. The table was crammed with food, the taste was superb.

The guests split into two conversation groups. Rosalind something lively debate with Emironom, her plate is almost filled. Her cheeks glowed rosy, eyes bright. The heir, quickly realizing that on the left he couldn't get into a to the flow of endless speeches from his interlocutors, switched exclusively to me, putting all the new pieces of delicious dishes on my plate. At one point, I thought I was going to die of gluttony, which I told the heir. But he only reduced the supplements.

Darina ate silently, immersed in her thoughts, I don't think she even felt the taste of the dishes. But to ask what happened in

front of everyone was uncomfortable.

I enjoyed the heir's attentions, the taste of the dishes, and I didn't notice Zarina's looks until dessert arrived. In fact, the variety of kinds of sweet was not less than previous dishes, but a piece of cake that rested briefly on a plate turned out to be paradise delight. Delicate cream, moderately sweet, mingled with the sour taste of grapes and chocolate cream . I even closed my eyes with pleasure. And when opened, then I stumbled upon look of Zarina full hateful.

Heir, not noticing anything, offered another piece. But I said, I'm afraid my stomach was not prepared for such an abundance of food and I urgently need to retire to his chambers. Heir upset and even offered to accompany me, but I reminded him that it is not very convenient and shamefully fled. Zarina's eyes burned through my back, and for the first time, I realized I wasn't on vacation. Here the girls are trying to build their own happiness, to attract attention, and here I come, devour the very cakes, doing nothing at all, and the whole evening Prince is my. How can she not hate a rival? Should stay away from the heir and his potential wives before the end of the selection, or I may not live to see the end of the selection.

Chapter 24

With Zarina we met only at the table, every time she burned me with her eyes, but then I didn't go beyond the quiet hatred, so I got a little bit used to it and stopped paying attention. Reading the text I mastered in the past month, but the writing worse. I wrote exclusively on native. Nadine finished the play, next week to start rehearsals, I was given a piece, painted on roles. Travel itinerary more or less defined.

Weedon pleased that the invention he finished on time and was ready to present prototypes. And tonight, I'm expected by the Heir in his office, where the magician will first demonstrate the possibilities of invention, and after the demonstration, I stay to discuss a possible journey.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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